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TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

MERGING CRITICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR THE WRITING AND RHETORIC CLASS

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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to assist teachers of first-year composition as they move into the 21st century. Focusing on the two-year institution, but also asking for the assistance of University Writing Program Administrators as they train graduate students, it delineates a program that requires training, theory, experience, and attitude on the part of 21st century first-year composition teachers. My theoretical base draws on Freire, Berlin, Shor, Vygotsky, many feminisms, Crowley, Hillocks, Halasek, and Welch. Chapter 1 sets up the critical, liberatory, and student centered class as it offers a basic literature review for the critical writing and rhetoric teacher. Chapter 2 explores student resistance and suggests ways to make the many resistances productive. Through a Hillocks inspired analysis, Chapter 3 offers a fictional writing and rhetoric teacher in his first year as a model. Chapter 4 theorizes technology in the classroom and suggests ways to connect film, video, and computers to students' lives so that they may become judicious cybercitizens. Chapter 5 concludes that 21st century first-year writing and rhetoric must become a discipline in which those who teach it are dedicated to the course, well-trained, and well-compensated. It takes into account the continuing proliferation of the current-traditional paradigm as it seeks to insure that students emerge from the first-year writing sequence with critical, activist, and open minds, and that they can write persuasively and effectively for chosen specific audiences.

Chapter 1:
Merging Historiography and Theory for the Writing and Rhetoric Class

> *A course in composition is one of the few courses required of a majority of college students, a social domain through which future Working Persons, Tourists, Consumers, Teachers, CEOs, Portfolio Men, Consultants, Politicians, leaders of institutions of life worlds, and the parents and teachers of the next generations. . .will pass through. (Lu, An Essay, 44)*

Writing and Rhetoric instruction has enjoyed a long and varied history. From the fifth century BCE to the present time, writing and language instruction has been crucial in Western education.[1] As Kathleen Welch argues, "Part of the intellectual revolution of the second half of the fifth century and the fourth century B.C. involves the centrality of writing" ("Writing Instruction" 12). The intellectual traditions that stemmed from this era owe much to "the linearity and abstractness of writing . . . [which] enabled ways of thinking to alter" (Welch, "Writing Instruction," 8-9). From

[1] While the history of writing, beginning with the alphabet can be studied separately, the history of rhetoric and writing instruction in classical times seems to peak with the fifth century BCE. In "Writing Instruction In Ancient Athens After 450 B.C.," Kathleen Welch tells us that "Writing in its various physical forms – from Sumerian Cuneiform to Egyptian hieroglyphic – may be more than five thousand years old, but our records of systematic instruction in composition date more precisely to Athens in the middle of the fifth century before Christ" (1). See Welch's article for a detailed historiography of writing instruction in this important era.

its Ancient Greek beginnings, the study of writing in general and writing instruction in particular offers significant insight that can be useful for those of us who wish to theorize the teaching of writing for the twenty-first century.[2]

As writing has remained central, the twentieth century in American writing instruction has ushered in an era of new accessibility. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries, "Colleges, especially state institutions, were to open up their doors to people of talent – women as well as men, black as well as white, although genuine equality was an unattained ideal rather than a reality" (Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality*, 185-186). Yet, this new accessibility also emphasized the need for continued writing instruction since, "despite the claims of college professors that students ought to come to college with mastery of the composing process, no generation of college students has ever in fact done so" (Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality,* 203). Thus, in Berlin's words, "writing instruction will continue to occupy a central place in the school and college classroom" (Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality*, 220).

As most of us know, this accessibility stemmed originally in the U.S. from the Morrill Act[3], which established the land grant institutions. Higher education became more accessible and pedagogical changes were necessary as women, African

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[2] See also Welch's *Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric:* and for a complete history of writing instruction, see Murphy, James J. ed. *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Twentieth Century America.*

[3]Sponsored by Senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, the 1862 version of this Act was "An Act Donating public lands to the several States and [Territories] which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the Mechanic arts" and it marked the first Federal aid to higher education (Morrill Act).

Americans, and working class whites increasingly sought educational opportunities.[4] This accessibility became another important influence as new pedagogies were created and formed by educators of the time who wished to reach their new student body. In this vein, Susan Kates believes that if we are to understand current and future issues, that we must "study pedagogical history" (19) and contextualize the issues. As she writes,

> The simple fact is that if we do not have a sense of the ways in which some of our present concerns have been addressed or ignored in the past, the solutions we attempt to generate will suffer as a result of our failure to attend to the educational treatises, curricular and educational policy generated in other times. (19)

Kates further argues that "an activist rhetoric instruction is, in many ways, the predecessor of what we have more recently come to call critical pedagogy" (xi). Thus, it is uniquely important that we study past activist rhetorical instruction, as well as Freire's critical pedagogy so that we may theorize a new 21st century critical teaching practice that will be appropriate for the open admissions climate of the early 21st century. In other words, early activist practices and Freire's pedagogical efforts are the predecessors of a twenty-first century critical teaching practice.

Indeed, the history of the writing course can inspire new potential for the first year writing sequence, and it is this potential that I address in this project. Since those of us who theorize and teach writing have the opportunity to greatly influence

[4] See Kates, Susan. *Activist Rhetorics and American Higher Education* for a thorough treatment of this issue.

our culture and its people, we should not take this opportunity lightly. We must discuss past and present critical teaching and critical teachers, because, before we can envision our future, we must know our past. The next few sections discuss effective critical teaching practices of the late 20th century and situate them as a basis for the 21st century writing and rhetoric class. I begin by defining critical teaching and discussing successful critical teaching practices.

Critical Teaching

Critical teaching urges students to interpret and understand the world around them. A critical teacher shares power and authority in the classroom. A critical teacher is optimistic.[5] Throughout this project, I use the phrase "critical teaching" rather than "critical pedagogy" because my teaching theory is less "in your face" than most iterations of "critical pedagogy" and it focuses so heavily on students that the politics of the teacher fade into the background. My teaching theory is close to Brian Johnson's audience-oriented writing pedagogy, which represents "an attempt to embrace and explore differences between and among attitudes, students, teachers, and educational institutions[6]" (133). I want to ignite students' critical and activist

[5] In *Ways of Thinking, Ways of Teaching*, George Hillocks says optimistic teachers often make "direct positive statements about their students" (44). These teachers have faith in their students. See Hillocks, Chapter 3 for a thorough definition of optimistic teaching and the contrastive non-optimistic teacher.

[6] In this unpublished dissertation, Johnson rehistoricizes audience in order to place it as a "central tenet" of writing and rhetoric studies. To do this, he draws from many theories and time periods, from the classical to the current. He writes that "an audience oriented writing pedagogy embraces a dissensus which does not necessarily

consciousness so that they will support issues that are important to them. I believe, as does Johnson, that we must take the best of each theory and use what applies to our own situation.

The results of successful critical teaching would be students who attain a critical and activist consciousness. These students could critically interpret and read the rhetoric of their world, including web pages, television, and e-mail. If we are truly successful, after a two-semester sequence of critical writing instruction, students would be able to work with both rhetoric and propaganda[7] by analyzing texts such as Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* and using philosophies such as Stephen Toulmin's[8] theory of argumentation to scrutinize popular culture and political debates. They would know that rhetoric tends to be biased and that all political positions are subjective. They would understand the subject positions of others and they would approach all issues with open hearts and open minds. They would become actively involved in political and social causes. They would insist on social justice for all races and genders and –

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lead to antagonism, but which instead can lead to the widening of acceptable possibilities" (133).

[7] This has been debated and I do not advocate getting first year students involved in debating rhetoric vs. propaganda. Rebecca M.L. Curnalia offers an excellent overview of propaganda studies in "A Retrospective on Early Studies of Propaganda and Suggestions for Reviving the Paradigm." In this article, Curnalia offers the changing definitions of propaganda over the years and synthesizes those definitions into her own: "Specifically, propaganda is a series of targeted, systematic messages disseminated through multiple channels for a prolonged period of time that offer biased opinions or perspectives through the selective use of specific, emotionally arousing, comprehensible, and aesthetically appealing techniques that circumvent scrutiny of the message to influence attitudes and beliefs" (240). In addition, I believe the best definition of rhetoric comes from Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, Book 1, Chapter 2: "Let rhetoric be defined as an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion" (36).

[8] See Stephen Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument.*

most importantly -- they would be able to write persuasively and effectively for chosen specific audiences. Of course, this is quite a list of goals to accomplish in one or two semesters, especially in a first-year writing course. Yet, we should set our expectations high, for this kind of critical writing course can be a transformative experience for students and teachers. As students begin to question the issues that they have accepted all their lives, they break out of their self-imposed bubbles. They begin to explore and understand other points of view and this transforms the lives of the students and their teachers.

Connecting to Freire

Writing and rhetoric teachers have often incorporated Freirean theories. As Kate Ronald and Hephzibah Roskelly write, Paulo Freire is one of our "most powerful role models" (Untested 612). While Freirean ideas are valuable for all educators, they seem to be particularly effective for the writing class in which the teacher wishes to incorporate critical and liberatory ideas that will lead to a critical and activist consciousness. In this section, I analyze the major tenets from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* so that we can see the purpose and the possibility of taking these ideas and teaching practices into the 21st century[9].

As most writing and rhetoric scholars know, in Freire's "banking concept of education" (*Oppressed* 53), the teacher often becomes the Subject and the students

[9] Later in this project, I will explore theorists such as George Hillocks, James Berlin, bell hooks, and others who connect to Freirean ideas. Most writing and rhetoric theorists connect to Freire in some way. I believe, however, that it is important to go to the original source and thus I do so here.

are the Objects in the classroom. In such a classroom, the material becomes "petrified and lifeless" (*Oppressed* 52) as the words lose their transformative power. The information is memorized and regurgitated as students are turned into "containers" to be filled by the all knowing teacher (*Oppressed* 53). The banking concept does not encourage an active living language of inquiry. The students do not educate the teacher, for "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (*Oppressed* 53). While writing and rhetoric scholars who have theorized the writing class and who strive to be critical and liberatory[10] teachers would shun this ineffective practice, it remains widespread. In such a class, the teacher might lecture on a topic – perhaps transitions, paragraphs, or another writing related topic. Students would take notes on the topic, read their textbook chapter, and perhaps take a quiz. They would later go home and write a paper. In this way of thinking, if they have the aptitude, have been taught well, and if they have paid attention and memorized the right information, the students will write effectively.[11] This teacher-centered class would ignore revision – especially peer revision – for the teacher's word would be final. The students would have no stake in the class and they would likely write to please the teacher. The resultant student writing would often be mechanical and focused on

[10] Although I seek a "critical" teaching practice, I often pair "critical" with "liberatory," "activist," or other similar terms to show that "critical teaching" is not enough. Terms overlap and fade into one another as they convey new kinds of meaning.

[11] Although I present this hypothetically, I observed such a class being taught in Spring 2005.

correctness.[12] The critical and activist consciousness is a non-issue in such a class.

In sharp contrast to this hierarchical kind of teaching, Freire tells us that a liberatory educator would share power with students as both "engage in critical thinking" (*Oppressed* 56). The teacher must exhibit a "profound trust" (*Oppressed* 56) in the students as they become "partners" (*Oppressed* 56). Freire writes that:

> Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking method in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings. . .. They must abandon the educational goal of deposit-making and replace it with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world. Problem-posing education, responding to the essence of consciousness – intentionality – rejects communiqués and embodies communication. (*Oppressed* 60)

Liberating education is an "act of cognition" rather than a "transferal of information" (*Oppressed* 60). Through dialogue, the teacher teaches and learns. The students learn and teach. Teacher and students "become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (*Oppressed* 61). Critical and activist consciousnesses are ignited in students and sharpened in teachers through trust and partnership because issues are

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[12] Of course, I am referring to the current-traditional paradigm which, unfortunately, remains pervasive in writing instruction today. As Sharon Crowley writes in *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current Traditional Rhetoric,* "Current-traditional pedagogy removes writer's right to control their discourses, to choose whichever style, arrangement, or inventional procedure seems to them to suit the occasion. Instead, it displaces their authority onto a set of prescribed rules that strictly govern the intentional process; equally restrictive rules force writers to select from only a few mandated genres and prescribe the way that every discourse is to be arranged, down to the very order in which sentences are to follow one another" (95). See Chapter 5 for a more thorough discussion of the current-traditional paradigm.

discussed and questioned and students find that they have a stake in their own education.

A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher takes risks, shuns current-traditional methods, and incorporates ways to help students read their own world, interpret the rhetoric of that world, and make their own decisions regarding that world. As Peter McLaren notes: " For Freire, pedagogy has as much to do with the teachable heart as the teachable mind, and as much to do with efforts to change the world as it does with rethinking the categories that we use to analyze our current condition within history" (*Che Guevara* 160-161). Teaching, rethinking, analyzing, and ACTING merge to form activist teaching practices that benefit students of critical teachers. Since they touch so many students, first year writing teachers who use critical and liberatory methods have the opportunity to change our culture and its people for the better as they send those students out into the world of business, government, etc., with critical minds and social consciences.

The 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher does not prepare lesson plans in private and then present them in the classroom. Instead, before, during, and after class, he or she reflects and continually revises lesson plans as students become "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher" (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* 62). As students feel increasingly challenged, they will rise to the challenge because, "In problem posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in

process, in transformation" (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 64). Everyone in the classroom benefits when power and authority are shared because teachers can observe the changes that take place in student's writing. A persuasive and eloquent writer can be a better critical citizen because he/she can express ideas clearly and persuasively and thus become a leader in the community.

Freirean Conversations

We cannot ignore the political and social nature of Freirean philosophy that often comes to the forefront in discussions of critical teaching methods. In his foreword to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Richard Shaull writes, "Education is once again a subversive force" (11), and for writing teachers, this is a promising prediction, for it is our job to be subversive in the classroom as we teach students to "come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves…." (Shaull 11). Critical teaching allows a teacher to become an activist and critical citizen in her own classroom. Many passionate and dedicated teachers see teaching as their own social justice project and as a way to influence future generations.

However, many Freirean scholars are radical and Marxist, and they enter the classroom with a political agenda that is often at odds with students' political leanings. Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux are the two major proponents of "critical pedagogy" and its ensuing political implications. A leading Freirean scholar and radical pedagogue, McLaren offers unique insight into Freire's theory and practice.

In his article, "Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of Possibility," McLaren's definition of critical pedagogy clearly shows the political dimension of the phrase: "Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state" (10). Another argument is offered by Henry Giroux as he criticizes those who would "reduce [Freirean theory] to pedagogical technique or method" (Postcolonialism 16). He reminds us that Freire's work has been "appropriated in ways that denude it of some of its most important political insights" (Postcolonialism 16). For McLaren, Giroux, and others, Freirean critical pedagogy is revolutionary and necessary to encourage students to question the status quo.

Yet, not all scholars agree that critical pedagogy is a positive force for North American classrooms. C.H. Knoblauch defines "critical literacy" as:

> …a radical perspective whose adherents notably Paulo Freire, have been influential primarily in the third world, especially in Latin America. Strongly influenced by Marxist philosophical premises, critical literacy is not a welcome perspective in this country, and it finds voice currently in only a few academic enclaves, where it exists more as a facsimile of oppositional culture than as a practice. (79)

Knoblauch further points out that "although critical literacy is trendy in some academic circles, those who commend it also draw their wages from the capitalist economy it is designed to challenge" (79). McLaren and Giroux are both dedicated

radicals, but Knoblauch is correct and few writing and rhetoric teachers of the 21st century will want to take a radical, political pedagogy into the classroom. This could distract from the focus of the course, which should be the students and the writing. In our current political climate, radical politics tend to do little but alienate students who are already wary. In a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class, the politics of the teacher aren't as important as the well-being of the students. It is crucial that we gain students' trust so that we can encourage them to embrace their own critical consciousness and to possibly embark on their own social justice projects.

In addition, Richard E. Miller reminds us that "Freire. . . wasn't concerned with teaching first-year college students the nuances of academic prose or the virtues of the expository essay" (18). While understanding that Freire's ". . . liberatory pedagogy has long provided an attractive alternative to the grinding and effacing processes of professional training that are so popular among those who equate education with vocationalism" (11), and lauding the pedagogy for offering "a critical vocabulary, a philosophically grounded and politically defensible pedagogy, a vision of a better world" (11), Miller's task is to point out the problems with Freire's tenets as they are used in writing and rhetoric classrooms. Like Knoblauch, Miller reminds us that the pedagogy was "originally developed to address the needs of the illiterate and dispossessed peoples of Brazil" (11), not undergraduates in North American colleges and universities.

Another important criticism that Miller offers centers on students. What is it like to be a student of a problem-posing teacher? *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* offers

few clues and "provides few glimpses of what it means to be a student under the problem-posing system" (13). With so much talk about the student-centered classroom, it would seem to be important to get student's opinion of the effectiveness of liberatory pedagogy.

It is not my intention to take Freirean philosophy and strip it of its political dimension, for I believe that the personal and the political overlap in many ways. However, I believe that the political component of Freirean theory is only one facet of a many-faceted theory that can take writing and rhetoric studies into the 21st century as theory and practice merge in the classroom.

With all of these arguments in mind, it becomes clear that "critical" teaching is not enough. Our 21st century writing and rhetoric classrooms must be critical AND liberatory AND activist AND student centered AND more as theories and philosophies merge. Ronald and Roskelly remind us that Freire asked Americans to recreate and rewrite his ideas.[13] They focus on ways to "recreate rather than import Freire into our own North American contexts – and so not lose the power of his ideas. . ." (Untested 612). They believe that Freire's message to teachers includes becoming "participants and insiders in the process of enacting our own kind of liberatory pedagogy" (Untested 615). Most teachers who use liberatory pedagogy recreate it into their own context by taking into consideration their own teaching style, students, and limit situations. Appropriating the pedagogy for one's own needs

[13] See his *Pedagogy of Hope.*

may indeed discard some of the political insights, but the pedagogy remains useful and adaptable for many.

From Theory to Practice: Shor and Berlin

To fully understand the kind of teaching for which we must all strive, I offer examples of two veteran critical writing teachers of the 20th century. Ira Shor and James Berlin operate in different discourse communities, yet they both offer examples of their own theory and practice. I include them so that we can see how they deploy critical teaching practices and thus we have more ideas to contemplate for our 21st century critical writing and rhetoric classes.

While many teachers incorporate portions of liberatory pedagogy, or we use some practices and not others, Ira Shor is one of a handful of educators whose classroom is an example of true liberatory education. Shor tests the limits "by practicing theory and by theorizing practice in a real context" (*When Students* 3). Shor takes critical teaching very seriously and he shares power with his students from day one. He explains that "one goal of liberatory learning is for the teacher to become expendable" (*Critical Teaching* 98). Like most teachers, Shor feels uncertain on the first day of class, yet he seizes the opportunity to "make critical knowledge with the students, not hand it to them" (*When Students* 3). While the common practice is to spend the first day of class going over the syllabus, Shor tells students his name and the name of the course. He then asks each student to come to the board, introduce themselves and talk about themselves. His tactic here is to make students

do more talking than the teacher and thus the focus is on students rather than teacher (*Critical Teaching* 128-129). By performing, students learn and this sets the stage for a course that is student centered and liberatory.

In an open-admissions college with working class students for the most part, Shor goes to great lengths to emphasize dialogue, critical reflection, and power sharing. He believes that "critical pedagogy is a constantly evolving process which calls for continual change and growth in [himself] and the students" (*When Students* 4). In a writing course focused on Utopia, he negotiates the entire syllabus with students. He negotiates attendance policies, late policies, requirements for an "A," and more. This course, he says, is an example of what can happen when "the power of knowledge was connected to the knowledge of power" (*When Students* 4). He takes volunteers and forms an after-class group where students can tell him what worked, what didn't, what he should spend more time on, what was boring. The students put Shor through the ringer, yet, he made the adjustments as asked.

Shor writes that this liberatory process is "very demanding on the teacher" (*Critical Teaching* 101). The teacher should have a lesson plan, but "must be ready for anything" (*Critical Teaching* 101). The discussion can move in many different directions and the teacher must be able to let go of a rigid lesson plan when the class needs to move in different ways. As Shor writes, "Down from the pedestal and out from behind the lectern, the teacher leaves behind the simplicity of lectures and term papers for something much more rigorous and compelling" (*Critical Teaching* 102). Shor knows he cannot "instantly shed or deny the authority [he] brings to class.

Many students won't allow that" (*When Students* 18). Yet, even though students don't always understand, sharing authority remains a major part of Shor's pedagogy[14].

While Shor offers his teaching practices in an open-admissions setting, James Berlin's students reside in a very different setting at Purdue. In *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures,* Berlin places Freire within a postmodern frame which, he says, "enables us to relate this silencing of citizens through literacy education to the formation of subjects as agents" (101). Berlin's project complicates Freirean theory and also makes it pertinent for the 21st century writing and rhetoric class. He states,

> Without language to name our experience, we inevitably become instruments of the language of others. As I am authorized through active literacy to name the world as I experience it – not as I am told by others I should be experiencing it – I become capable of taking action and assuming control of my environment. (101)

As Berlin examines the postmodern critical classroom, he offers concrete ideas of what that classroom should look like: "All voices must be heard and considered in taking action; the worth of the individual must never be compromised" (102). Like Shor, Berlin's philosophy rests on an open and comfortable setting where all students feel free to express themselves.

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[14]I would speculate that Shor's subject position (older, experienced, and male) enables him to share authority in this unique and open way. However, "sharing authority" does not mean that no one has authority. Shor maintains a level of authority that stops the classroom from becoming unfocused and chaotic.

Berlin says that "success of the kind of classroom I am recommending depends upon teachers knowing their students" (104). Even as the aim of Berlin's course "remains the same in all situations: to enable students to become active, critical agents of the experiences rather than passive victims of cultural codes" (104). Berlin believes that students achieve critical literacy by performing: "Students ought to write as well as read poetry and fiction, create as well as interpret magazine ads, produce as well as critique television situation comedies and newscasts" (112). Like Shor, Berlin includes concrete examples of his own classroom. He believes that students should first "locate key terms in a text and situate these terms" (117). The terms are then set against their binary opposition. Binaries such as man-woman, nature-civilization, etc, help students situate themselves in terms of the text. Another part of Berlin's course involves interpreting cultural codes of television as he juxtaposes "Family Ties" and "Roseanne" – two 1980s situation comedies whose families reside in different social classes. They study how the different characters deal with issues such as teenage marriage. In another unit, students are asked to discover binary oppositions within a film. As Berlin writes, "Texts should be understood in terms of what they omit as well as what they include" (128). In Berlin's class, essay drafts are shared and "unreflective generalizations" (129) never go unchallenged.

Berlin reminds us that "when pressed to active dialogue, they may deny the obvious social and political conflicts they enact and witness daily" (102). Like many, Berlin's students "assured [him] that race and gender inequalities no longer exist in

the United States and simply do not merit further discussion" (102). Indeed, as Berlin notes, "making [students] conscious of the concealed conflicts in their language, thought, and behavior, is never pursued without some discomfort" (103). Yet, he says, "the successful use of the problem posing and dialogic method usually leads to increasing participation by students" (103). The teacher should share authority in such a classroom – not surrendering all authority – but sharing the "right to dialogue" (103) sets the tone for the liberatory writing classroom.

We can learn from Shor and Berlin. They can help us formulate a critical writing and rhetoric teaching practice for the 21st century. By offering classroom practices in addition to theoretical ideas, Shor and Berlin show us examples of ways to apply theory in a practical manner. As teachers in action, they serve as "middlemen" between the past (Freire) and the future. Shor shows us how to connect directly to Freire and Berlin demonstrates a mix of Frierean, postmodern, and classical theories.

While Freire, Shor, and Berlin show us the way, they do not mention women, feminisms, or feminist practices. An underlying feminism is a crucial aspect of a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class, and thus, the next section will focus on feminist pedagogy as an example of critical teaching practice.

Feminist Pedagogy: Critical Practices

Nedra Reynolds complains that "some of the most important voices in composition today – James Berlin, John Trimbur, and Lester Faigley – have a

tendency to ignore work in feminism that might complement or complicate their ideas" (66). Since Freire[15], Shor and Berlin do not include the feminist point of view, and I consider feminism to be a major part of critical teaching, I include a separate section on feminist pedagogy. Since this chapter is intended to demonstrate a foundation for critical teaching practices that encourage critical and activist consciousnesses of the 21st century, I include the theories and theorists that guide the project in a concise and focused manner. In other words, I cannot include everyone, but I have attempted to include the representative theories that guide critical teaching practices.

Feminist Pedagogy: A Brief Story of Origins

As with most things feminist, there is no single definition of feminist pedagogy. In addition, those who write about feminist pedagogy often assume that

[15] Bell hooks notes in *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* that she is consistently aware of the sexism in Paulo Freire's language and also his "phallocentric paradigm of liberation" (49). Yet, she says that Freire's own model invites criticism. Hooks decided that Freire's work is so valuable that she weaves his work into her feminist work. In addition, when she confronted Freire himself, he listened and he addressed her criticism. She believed that by doing so, he followed his own principles. Hooks tells us to "Think of the work as water that contains some dirt. Because you are thirsty you are not too proud to extract the dirt and be nourished by the water" (50). In addition, Ronald and Roskelly note, "Always seeing himself as much of as learner as a teacher, Freire became conscious of what female readers of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* called a 'large contradiction' in his work, his using sexist language when he wrote about liberatory education. At first Freire remembers his bewilderment. 'Now when I say men, that of course includes women.' He continues by asserting his debt to those critics for 'having made me see how much ideology resides in language.' He emerges with the conclusion that 'changing language is part of the process of changing the world' (*Pedagogy of Hope* 66-67)" (630). Thus, many feminists understand and forgive Freire because he admitted his mistakes and changed his practice.

feminist teacher equals feminist pedagogy and that most feminist pedagogy is enacted in the Women's Studies class. To attempt to gain an understanding of feminist pedagogy for writing and rhetoric studies it becomes important to explore the history of feminist pedagogy.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell believes its beginnings can be found in early craft learning circles:

> Deprived of formal education and confined to the home, a woman learned the crafts of housewifery and motherhood – cooking, cleaning, canning, sewing, childbearing, child-rearing, and the like – from other women through a supervised internship combining expert advice with trial and error……. Learning to adapt to variation is essential to mastery of a craft, and the highly skilled craftsperson is alert to variation, aware of a host of alternatives, and able to read cues related to specific conditions. (13)

Campbell tells us the characteristics of discourse related to craft learning:

> Such discourse will be personal in tone, relying heavily on personal experience, anecdotes, and other examples. It will tend to be structured inductively (crafts are learned bit by bit, instance by instance, from which generalizations emerge). It will invite audience participation, including the process of testing generalizations or principles against the experiences of the audience. Audience members will be addressed as peers, with recognition of authority based on

> experience (more skilled craftspeople are more experienced), and efforts will be made to create identification with the experiences of the audience and those described by the speaker. (13)

Campbell notes that "the goal of such rhetoric is empowerment" (13). After an analysis of the features of craft-learning, Campbell compares it with consciousness-raising. She notes that consciousness raising "invites audience members to participate in the persuasive process – it empowers them" (13). Campbell notes that "…while there is nothing inevitably or necessarily female about this rhetorical style, it has been congenial to women because of the acculturation of female speakers and audiences" (14). Women connect to this style because it is comfortable, especially for those who have been silenced in the past.

To build on Campbell's definition, feminist educator Berenice Malka Fisher believes that consciousness-raising plays a crucial role in the development of feminist pedagogy. Her approach "builds on an interpretation of feminist consciousness-raising that emphasizes a commitment to exploring connections between personal experiences and political issues, the expression of feelings, the development of analysis, and the evaluation of alternative actions" (3). Fisher believes that "this process promotes reflection and cultivates individual and collective judgments about what can be done about gender and related forms of injustice" (3). However, she also notes that "Consciousness-raising offers no simple road map for feminist teaching. . . It presents numerous contradictions and confounds any casual attempt to incorporate

its insights into an academic setting" (3). Thus, even as she explicates consciousness-raising and its implications in feminist pedagogy, she complicates the process.

Fisher brings up the important role of inquiry (3) as she notes that "ideas about feminist pedagogy. . .[are] complex and filled with conflicting values" (23). She sees feminist pedagogy and feminist teaching as both "part of a system of higher education that claims to help students succeed in society" and as "part of a social movement aimed at challenging and changing the current social order" (27). She notes that "activists and academics have long seen education as a vehicle for developing such thinking and communication" (27), and social justice is always a goal.

Fisher notes that "issues of power" (35) are crucial in feminist teaching, especially "relations of unequal power" (35). She writes that this kind of teaching is not meant to "transform students into feminists" (39). Instead, "It promotes awareness of gender injustice and cultivates women's capacity to make their own decisions about how to respond to that injustice, even when these decisions differ" (40). Thus, as Fisher defines it, feminist pedagogy is "teaching that engages students in political discussion of gender injustice" (44). She adds,

- This discussion is a collective, collaborative, and ongoing process that pays special attention to women's experiences, feelings, ideas, and actions.
- It seeks to understand and challenge oppressive power relations
- It supports and generates women's political agency by addressing women's "personal" concerns and taking them seriously

- It questions the meaning for differently situated women of oppression and liberation
- It proceeds non-judgmentally but cultivates the political judgment needed to act in response to gender and interwoven forms of injustice. (44)

Thus, the process of craft learning was applied to consciousness-raising, political aspects became crucial, and these issues merged and intersected into feminist pedagogy. With all of this in mind, so that we can further explore a critical teaching practice for the 21st century, the next section will delineate the feminist classroom – what it is and what it looks like.

The Feminist Classroom

Like a Freirean classroom, a feminist classroom is student-centered, collaborative and open. The feminist classroom is about sharing power, and ". . . decentering the authority of the professor" is a major principle that guides Susan Sanchez Casal and Amie A. Macdonald's pedagogy, along with:

> developing and foregrounding subjugated knowledges, legitimizing personal identity and experience as the foundation of authentic and liberatory knowledges (especially marginalized identities and experiences), discussion-based classes, [and] emphasis on student voice. (4)

As noted earlier, this kind of classroom asks for hard work on the part of the students. In many ways, it is easier for them to just sit back and absorb the authority of the teacher.

Of course, this kind of classroom is also more work for the teacher. So that all voices can be heard, a feminist classroom must be a comfortable place for all students. They must be comfortable with the teacher and with each other so that they can discuss issues that might not be so comfortable. This requires forging a community of trust from the beginning of the semester. Like Ira Shor, Linda Woodbridge writes that this kind of teaching is difficult

> because a truly open discussion is unpredictable in its direction. If a teacher is to give it shape by gently leading, nudging, making connection between ideas advanced by different speakers, she must constantly be on her toes, living by her wits, rather than dragging the conversation safely back to the points she had planned to cover that day and set down firmly in her notes. (145)

The teacher cannot retreat to the "safety" of her notes and pre-formulated discussion questions; she must be ready for anything, including resistance. Indeed, the safety of notes and lesson plans can be comforting, but the hard work of an open classroom and its ensuing lively discussions can be more satisfying for students and teacher, as the learning increases exponentially.

In addition, it would be very easy to stand in the front of the class and provide the answers. But sharing power includes rejecting hierarchies. As Woodbridge

notes, "we are starting to uncrown the instructor as the classroom's voice of wisdom, to seek postmodern teaching strategies, wherein many voices are heard and the instructor is no longer King Henry" (134). Nor is the instructor Queen Anne; she is a guide, and a coach, who facilitates classroom discussion and assignments that value all voices, from the outspoken conservative male to the quiet feminist. Hard work indeed.

In a critical, liberatory, feminist writing and rhetoric class, students can learn as much or more from each other as they can from the instructor. As Daumer and Runzo write,

> . . . the maternal teacher no longer sees herself as a judge who enforces external standards by grading students' ability to comply with them. Rather, she attempts to meet students on their own grounds, to individualize instruction, and to allow for self sponsored writing by encouraging students to interact as much with each other as with the instructor. (49)

Like Shor, Berlin, and other Freirean teachers, the feminist teacher will often place students in groups, circulate, and interact with each group. Once again, she must be ready for anything and she must guard against giving "the right answer" to the difficult questions.

A collaborative, liberatory, feminist, writing and rhetoric classroom encourages "participatory learning," which in turn can "encourage activism" and

"development of critical thinking" (Macdonald 117). When group collaboration in a mixed-gender group occurs,

> although we would expect male language would dominate, the new social structure of the peer learning group, the lack of patriarchal presence "teaching" and the presence of strong and vocal women in the group can combine to give women's language the power to surface and replace men's language. (Stanger 42)

Encouraging the emergence of the female voice, of course, does not mean silencing the male voice; it means that everyone would be heard; even the resistant white male. Betty Sasaki writes that "A truly transformative feminist pedagogy must strategically and actively engage the multiple relationships of power that come into play in any classroom" (46). These relationships shift and change throughout the semester as the students become empowered, comfortable, and tolerant of one another's ideas. When students realize that the feminist teacher will not "shoot them down," they will be more likely to express their ideas.

As a critical and liberatory practice, feminist pedagogy must remain flexible because every classroom is different. Adriana Hernandez writes,

> Feminist pedagogy is a flexible practice that does not tie itself to dogmatic rules which prescribe teaching in a certain way to everyone in all circumstances. Instead the feminist classroom legitimizes struggle as positive and productive; it provides the arena to analyze contradiction, identification, and resistance. As feminist teachers we

> struggle to persuade students to acknowledge our authority in the classroom: to make a place for women's knowledge and experience. At the same time we struggle to discover, respect, and work within the differences our students bring with them to class. . . we seek neither to overcome struggle nor to erase difference, but to promote collective participation in a rhetorical process of engagement with transformative possibilities for us all. (Eichhorn et al, 321)

One should not hide her feminism in the classroom, but she should always be aware of her audience. Our goal must always be to encourage critical minds, social consciences, and better writing through trust and openness.

The final aspect of feminist pedagogy that seems vitally important is that it invites resistance. As Sara Farris writes, "It's not so simple to recognize the liberatory possibilities of feminist pedagogy for male students" (Eichhorn et al 307). In addition, Alison L. Carse and Debra A. DeBruin point out that "the challenge of effective teaching in such contexts is to inspire engagement rather than disengagement and curiosity rather than indifference and hostility. . ." (185). "But," they say, "doing so requires that we be attuned to patterns of resistance, patterns we can then work to dismantle or redirect" (185). Carse and DeBruin offer many practical and theoretical solutions for teachers who are dismayed by the often disruptive nature of student resistance. They call for a "freewheeling and inventive pedagogy" that is "responsive to particular class dynamics and creative and experimental in its approach" (190). We must expect, and even invite student

resistance so as to stimulate the "trust among the students and between the students and the teacher" (191) that must be part of the feminist classroom. Carse and Debruin also suggest that as teachers, "we both encourage and model skills of open-minded inquiry, courage, humility, and fellow-feeling" (191). We cannot "exclude and disempower" (192) any students, even those who cause us grief. We must remember that "a primary objective in the feminist classroom is to sharpen students skills of critical analysis and argument" (194). As feminists, we must teach even misogynist males (and females) and we must do so effectively.

Feminisms for Writing and Rhetoric Studies

In her influential 1988 CCC article, "Composing as a Woman," Elizabeth Flynn writes about how the field "has been shaped by women" (518). However, she writes, "For the most part . . . the fields of feminist studies and composition studies have not engaged each other in a serious or systematic way" (519). While this statement may have been true in 1988, feminists rose to Flynn's challenge and since then, feminist pedagogy has been a major tenet of composition studies, even when it is not named "feminist."

Flynn's article set the stage for conversation in the field during the 1990's and beyond as she writes that "The classroom provides an opportunity for exploring questions about gender differences in language use" (525). Flynn states that "A feminist approach to composition studies would focus on questions of difference and

dominance in written language" (519). As I write, questions of difference and dominance continue to guide the conversations in and around composition studies.[16]

Feminism and Composition seem especially compatible as their theories, practices, and histories tend to merge. In her Introduction to *Feminisms and Composition Studies: In Other Words,* Susan Jarratt explores "the productive intersections and tensions" (1) of feminism and composition. She notes that feminism and composition share "an institutional site, an educational mission, and a conflicted relation to both" (2). She notes that "like composition studies, feminism is not a monolithic enterprise with a unified research agenda" (2). Indeed, both feminism and composition are interdisciplinary fields with multiple intersections and overlapping theories. Jarratt states that both feminist inquiry and composition studies "…seek to transform styles of thinking, teaching, and learning rather than to reproduce stultifying traditions" (3). She notes that feminism and composition speak to each other and that they have a "productive compatibility" (4).

Joy Ritchie and Kate Ronald ask many questions as they explore the "tangled relations among feminist theory, feminist pedagogy, the canon of rhetoric, and emergent women's rhetorics" (218). The most important question they ask for our purposes appears to be: "How can feminist pedagogies put in motion intersecting

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[16] A quick glance at the latest issues of *College Composition and Communication* shows that the December 2004 issue offers Keith D. Miller's "Plymouth Rock Landed on US: Malcolm X's Whiteness Theory as a Basis for Alternative Literacy" as a lead article. The February 2005 issue offers LuMing Mao's "Rhetorical Borderlands: Chinese American Rhetoric in the Making." College English offers similar titles. Questions of difference and dominance have remained in the forefront for many years.

dialogues that involve students in what Lynn Worsham calls 'the ongoing criticism of everyday life'" (218-219). They remind us that "employing a feminist pedagogy that locates theory and practice in the immediate contexts of women's lives and that models for students a resistant, critical stance toward monolithic descriptions of discourse and gender destabilizes conventional thinking about gender and rhetoric, about what is marginal and what is central" (219). "Such a pedagogy," they note, "has led us to acknowledge and resist our authority as teachers, to decenter it continually with our students' voices" (219). We know that those students voices may not always tell us what we want to hear, but we must press on if we are to encourage a critical and activist consciousness in our students.

As feminist teachers we must listen carefully to the different voices and the voices of difference. This involves valuing personal experience as a valid research option. Min-Zhan Lu "explores a feminist writing pedagogy that asks teachers and students to examine the political uses and abuses of personal experience when reading and writing differences" (239). Lu argues that "composition pedagogies based on revision through sequenced reading and writing assignments – revision defined as a means for exploring different ways of seeing – can be used to advance the feminist project of making experience work both experientially and analytically" (239). These ideas could work to connect to students through experience and analysis while avoiding the pedagogy of disclosure.

Thus, a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teaching practice will incorporate Freirean ideas and feminist ideas. Yet, the practice would not be

complete without a connection to Lev Vygotsky's ideas on learning and development. Thus, the next section will provide a brief overview of the Vygotskian ideas that are crucial for the writing and rhetoric class.

The Vygotskian Classroom

Lev Vygotsky writes, "The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge" (*Mind in Society*, 24). Taken into the classroom, this is speaking, writing, and doing. Vygotsky further believes that environment plays a crucial part in development and that social history passed through another person produces this "complex human structure" (30). This does not mean that social history should be passed from teacher to student(s), but rather through more highly developed peers working in collaboration. In addition, Vygotsky notes, "For higher functions, the central feature is self-generated stimulation, that is, the creation and use of artificial stimuli which become the immediate causes of behavior" (39). Vygotsky is talking about simple operations such as tying a knot or notching a stick to aid memory, but I believe that in our digital generation, we should incorporate computer, television, and other digital screens into the category "artificial stimuli." So we have teacher as mediator, readings, screens, and peer collaboration. All work together to move a classroom full of individuals into a higher level of learning and thus writing.

A major part of a 21st century critical teaching practice for writing and rhetoric relies on activity theory including Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (*Mind in Society* 86). Another major tenet is Vygotsky's assertion that "the structure of behavioral development to some degree resembles the geological structure of the earth's core ("Genesis" 155). Referencing Kretschmer, Vygotsky notes "The old level does not die when a new one emerges, but is copied by the new one and dialectically negated by being transformed into it and existing in it. Instinct is not destroyed, but 'copied' in conditioned reflexes as a function of the ancient brain, which is now to be found in the new one" ("Genesis" 155-156). When taken into the classroom, this layer of theory could move students into layers of knowledge that could address resistance and possibly spark an activist consciousness in first-year students.

As we keep all of this in mind, those of us who have spent many years studying writing and rhetoric are in a place where we no longer think about Freire for the classroom because critical teaching practices are automatic or because we connect more to Hillocks, Halasek, or other more contemporary writers. Yet, like Vygotsky's, Paulo Freire's writings are the backbone of critical teaching for the 21st century and this overview serves to remind us of their importance. Thus, as we remember Kates's words and study pedagogical history so as to understand the future,

we can see the layers of influence of the Athenians, the Activists, and the Critical Pedagogues. How we use these influences is up to us.

Chapter 2:
Critical Teaching and Productive Resistances

A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher will seek to make students resistance productive. He/she will notice that the writing and rhetoric literature is full of stories of instructors who attempted to supplement their own critical teaching theory with classroom readings that addressed gender, race, and/or social class. These stories often focus on the student resistance that the instructors observed. A class with readings on women's oppression often has been characterized by the resistance of a few students, as did a class on global education[17]. Readings, discussions, film, and technology that have at their core a critical, liberatory, and/or feminist teaching practice will often be resisted by students who either don't understand, or are opposed to the issues presented.

While many of us expect resistance when we bring in multicultural issues, student resistances can be quite complicated, because students can resist the teacher's race, gender, age, dress, and/or other perceived differences. They can resist teaching techniques. They often avoid group work, or any kind of collaboration. They resist

[17] This class will be described later in the chapter.

revision. In fact, many students want a banking-model classroom because they just don't know anything else.[18]

With all of this in mind, this chapter will survey the conversations that have taken place within the field of writing and rhetoric studies regarding resistance in the classroom – why students resist and what we can do to address their resistance. We begin with the story of Josh[19].

Josh and Lauren

Josh is an entering freshman at the University of Oklahoma. He is excited because he always wanted to go to OU. From Tuttle, Oklahoma, a suburb of Oklahoma City with a small-town feel, Josh has grown up in a traditional Protestant Christian family. His mother is a stay-at-home mom and his dad owns an oil field supply company. Just like many families in Tuttle, Oklahoma, the family eats dinner together every evening. They go to church every Sunday. Josh's mother and father are conservative and patriotic. They fly the American flag in their front yard and they have "support our troops" stickers on their SUV. They voted for George W. Bush.

Josh has grown up in a conservative Christian church and most of his friends go to the same church. His youth pastor, who is very much into conservative politics, has warned him about going away to college and all of the temptations he will

[18] As I noted in Chapter 1, the banking classroom is one in which teachers know all and students are containers to be filled by the all knowing teacher. In this method, "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 53).

[19] Josh is a fictional character.

encounter there. As a graduation present, the church gives all seniors a copy of *How to Stay Christian in College*, a text to help them deal with the pressures and the changes involved in college life.[20]

Josh's dad listens to "The Rush Limbaugh Show" every day. Dinner-time conversations often revolve around Rush's daily rant. The family agrees that there are serious problems on college campuses with liberal professors who attempt to indoctrinate students into their way of thinking. They discuss the feminists and their attempts to destroy the family. Josh promises to stay strong and not to allow college life to change him. He values his way of life and he will not allow liberal professors to indoctrinate him. He will fight every step of the way.

Josh's first class is English Composition 1. He is not excited about taking it, but since he was always good at English, he is sure he will make a good grade. As he enters the classroom, Josh notices a friend from Tuttle high school and they sit together. Finally, they are OU students! They are both scared and excited as their instructor enters the room. . ..

Lauren[21] is a second year PhD student in the Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy program. She grew up in Oklahoma and is thrilled to be back at the

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[20] More political propaganda than spiritual encouragement, this text assumes that most, if not all, college and university teachers have an anti-Christian bias. The text assures students that postmodernism is anti-Christian: "A Postmodernist thinks life is fragmented. He doesn't believe his life is going anywhere – and he doesn't think yours is either." (Budziszewski 45). In a section called "Dealing with Hostile Teachers," the text suggests that teachers will use ridicule, partiality, (specifically, calling only on atheists) and grade bias, if you do not agree with their political positions. The text offers scenarios and ways to challenge teachers and also urges students to complain to the Dean.

[21] Like Josh, Lauren is fictionalized.

University of Oklahoma to work on her graduate degree. Lauren grew up in a community similar to Josh's, but she left Oklahoma to pursue her education in Ohio. She earned a bachelors degree in English and a master's degree in Rhetoric and Composition. Education was a life-changing experience for Lauren. Through classes in activist and feminist rhetorics and service learning projects, she discovered new worlds. She began to truly care about oppressed people and social justice became a passion. As a graduate teaching assistant, she incorporates critical theories and liberatory pedagogy into her curriculum. She experiments with decentering the classroom and sharing authority with her students. She does not hide her belief that her classroom is a place to provide voice for her female students. As she enters the classroom, she notices Josh and his friend in the back and says to herself, "those two look like trouble." A collision is about to occur. . . .

I begin this chapter on student resistance with the narrative of Lauren and Josh because this kind of political narrative is what we tend to expect when we discuss student resistance. In this area of study, student resistance often emerges with an agenda. Often, students truly believe that instructors have an agenda – to indoctrinate the students into a "liberal" way of thinking, while instructors simply want students to <u>think.</u> Students resistance here, then, is a refusal. Students refuse to listen and they refuse to think, often because they fear indoctrination. Much of the literature on the topic revolves around political splits such as these – students are socially and politically conservative because they were raised that way and teachers are liberal because they are educated. The underlying message in these articles often is that if

we can just get students to open their eyes and their minds, they will understand "our" way of thinking. This chapter contains some of this kind of rhetoric; yet, my purpose in writing a chapter on resistance is to show how resistance can be much more than a conservative/liberal split. I wish to show the productive side of resistance; how it can be theorized and used productively for a 21st century critical teacher who wishes to inspire students to a critical and activist consciousness.

Defining Resistance for Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Whether it is political, social, obvious, or insidious, student resistance is complicated indeed. And when one adds teacher resistance, the layers of resistance can be even more complicated. Yet, they can move teachers and students to a higher and deeper level of understanding and writing. In my mind, resistance can take place in the political realm but it can also be social and intellectual as students and teachers refuse to accept surface ideas, but always question and seek deeper understanding, knowledge, and intellectual engagement with the issues. This cannot be a teacher versus student resistance as described above. It must be teachers and students together resisting the forces from above, below, inside, outside, and in-between. Let us begin working toward this productive resistance by exploring the many definitions that have been put forth by others.

In "Resistance as a Tragic Trope," John Trimbur notes that "the term 'resistance' has become a commonplace in the study and teaching of writing" (3). He states that resistance can often be found in the following categories: "resistance to

school," "resistance to courses," resistance to teachers and classroom practices," "resistance to texts," "resistance to peers," and "resistance to parents" (5-6). Indeed, in the classroom, all or part of these resistances can combine to create a difficult, yet interesting, atmosphere for students and teachers alike.

Trimbur also contextualizes the word "resistance" as "signifying a moment of crisis in the process movement" (8). Trimbur states that the demise of current-traditional rhetoric did not automatically turn "students into willing and fluent composers" (8). He believes that it is no coincidence that resistance theory arose in 1988,

> when process teaching reached its limits or outright broke down. Resistance, in other words, gave writing teachers a way to recover their equilibrium when all we had to offer failed to repair the damage we imagined the English teacher's red pen and the authoritarian prescriptiveness of the five-paragraph theme had done to students. (8)

Trimbur further reminds us that "actual moments of resistance invariably involve very real dangers – of death, torture, jail" (10). Indeed, when we remember the great resistance movements of the past few centuries, our concerns about students resisting in one classroom pale in comparison. However, when you are the teacher whose classroom is disrupted, student resistance becomes an important area of study.

Complicating Student Resistance

When writing about the relationship of composition studies and resistance, Tom Fox concludes, "What a mess!" (75). He says, "What's happened is that, in the circulation of the term 'resistance,' it has increasingly been narrowed down to classroom behavior and, thus, depoliticized" (75). Indeed, resistance is difficult to define, and/or to categorize, especially when we consider the long history of the term.

Geoffrey Chase agrees that "resistance is perhaps, in one sense, a misleading term because of the connotations we associate with the word" (15). In "Accommodation, Resistance and the Politics of Student Writing," Chase follows three students working on senior projects as they resist their audience and their discourse community by resisting writing conventions. The students resisted scientific writing and form in their own ways and demonstrated how resistance can be positive as they learn from their resistance because for them, "it is a movement toward emancipation" (15). This was not a classroom behavior problem, and in fact, if it was a problem at all, it moved Chase's students forward through their resistance. Chase further states that "resistance becomes extremely valuable behavior because in it we see more clearly the links between the social processes of a particular discourse community and the larger processes which characterize our culture" (13). The resistance displayed by Chase's students became productive because Chase was able to understand it as a productive action.

Resistance is not always a simple response on the part of students. In fact, student resistance can be complicated indeed. In "Teachers as Students, Reflecting

Resistance," Douglas Hesse reflects on the complicated resistances that arise in the first-year composition class, as well as the graduate-level class. Students often resist reading assignments and in this article, Hesse narrates his comparison of graduate and first-year resistances. He states: "Students resisted material that was new to them, partly by invoking ideas they perceived as commonsensical or natural, partly by comparing these readings to texts as they imagined texts should be" (225). Hesse's graduate students, who were for the most part, taking their first course in composition theory, responded to readings by David Bartholomae and David Bleich with comments such as "why can't these people write?" (225). As Hesse notes, "When readings failed to fit their existing sense of things, they responded not by engaging their contents but by calling into question their forms. In the students' minds the difficulties lay in the works, not themselves" (225). These graduate student resistances magnify first-year student resistances. First-year students are resisting the University. They do not yet belong to the discourse community of the University and thus they exhibit "anti-academic behavior" (Hesse 226). Hesse notes that this can be more "the difficulty of making connections rather than simple laziness" (226).[22]

If the rhetorical situation is not taken into account, we risk reproducing the inequalities that we seek to avoid. The teacher, as authority, can dominate discussions and influence the articulation of ideology, and students such as Josh may resist if the

[22] Perhaps there is more going on here. I would add that Hesse's class members could also be caught in the age old literature/composition bias that unfortunately still exits. Literature students and professors often do not value the teaching of writing and rhetoric and composition students sometimes do not value literary studies. This split must be addressed and mended if writing and rhetoric studies are to remain in English departments.

articulated ideology is too far from their own ideology. David Bleich states that "There is reason to think that students want to write about what they say they don't want to write about. They want a chance to write about racism, classism, and homophobia, even though it makes them uncomfortable" (163). Bleich believes that this discomfort is the "classroom manifestation of 'resistance' to social and political thinking" (163). He believes that this resistance is focused on the "ideology of individualism" (165) in which "Sexist values are more firmly entrenched than racist values" (166). Bleich concludes that

> most students have no language to identify these others in real social and political terms. Because of this double gap in language and social awareness, students resist the introduction of social and political issues. They become either excessively defensive and obscene . . . or inattentive to their own interest. . . Unwittingly, they fall back on the only ideology they learned – individualism – and feel an unaccountable personal and social frustration. (169)

Bleich's idea about students not having the language makes sense but he tends to fall into the old trap of think that if students were only educated and enlightened, they would think like "us."[23]

It is crucially important here to remember bell hooks's reminder that "some folks think that everyone who supports cultural diversity wants to replace one dictatorship of knowing with another, changing one set way of thinking for another"

[23] The "us" I refer to here is the educated, socially and politically liberal, academic.

(32). These students do not realize that there is not one set amount of power. They do not realize that there is enough power for teachers, students, men, women, people of color, conservatives, liberals, and everyone else too.

Resisting the Female Presence

One of the most common resistances that teachers encounter is the resistance to a perceived feminism in the teacher or to feminist readings, and once again, feminism merits its own section, this time because male and female feminist teachers seem to host special kinds of resistance. The following section will narrate different feminist experiences and resistances to show the depth of the issue. It will show how some feminists handle resistance, and how they use it to create a productive classroom.

Resistant students are not always vocal students. In fact, the silent resistors can disrupt a class in many different ways. Sharon Crowley writes of the "hostile silence" (*Composition* 225) she encountered from a group of white men in a class. She felt that the men were resisting not only her feminism, but her subject position of "old woman" (*Composition* 226). She writes: "These young men did not like being in a class where an old woman had opinions, expressed them with force, and was, to boot, their professor" (*Composition* 226). They resist her age, her dress, and her body. They perceived that she held power in the relationship and all of this combined into a powerful (albeit silent) resistance. Bell hooks has also encountered this kind of resistance to her subject position. When teaching, she is always aware of "the

presence of [her] body" (*Teaching* 135) in the classroom, for a woman, especially a black woman does not have the luxury of being "a mind and not a body," (137). She remembers,

> as an undergraduate [she] had white male professors who wore the same tweed jacket and rumpled shirt or something, but we all knew that we had to pretend. You would never comment on his dress, because to do so would be a sign of your own intellectual lack (137).

Hooks further tells us that "The person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body" (137) and this powerful person is almost always white and male.

Similarly, in "Meanings and Metaphors of Student Resistance," Dale M. Bauer reminds us that resistance often surfaces due to anxiety about power: "Many students resist being wrenched out of the now comfortable paradigm of liberal humanism, with its rhetoric of positivist science, bourgeois individualism, and capitalist progress" (65). Students resist what makes them uncomfortable, and feminism makes them uncomfortable. Bauer also writes, "In rejecting feminist professors, many students also reject the embodiment of the threat of change" (66). She notes that many students write about her hair, her clothes, or her body parts on student evaluations. By reducing the feminist teacher to a body, they can dismiss her. Yet, Bauer believes that "meeting resistance is better than dodging or dismissing it" (66), and she sees resistance "not as something to be overcome but as a necessary component in the 'historical attitude' toward feminist pedagogy" (67). In her student evaluations, Bauer discovered that students "want an authority in the classroom" (67).

"But," she argues, "we need to revise what that authority means" (67). The students do not identify the feminist professor with authority and they "see knowledge and authority as inherited or conferred, not as an activity or engagement or act of persuasion" (68). In short, Bauer believes, "we have to learn to read student resistance to feminist teaching as a nostalgia for an imagined neutrality, a particularly dangerous nostalgia since it fuels the antifeminist backlash we see all around us today" (70).

Bauer adds,

> Not all of this cultural and historical contextualizing meets with easy acceptance, and the students' resistance is not surprising. What strikes me most about their resistance as embedded in historical resistance to women is that students see "us" (feminists) – almost all feminists hear the complaint sooner or later – as "overreading" or taking an "innocent" or objective text and imputing cultural meaning to it. "Why can't it just tell a good story" they complain, their emphasis on just registering the intensity of their frustration or disdain and the inevitability of their submission. (74)

In addition, "the charges of 'political correctness' and indoctrination' emerge from the existing confusion about power in general in our nation, and on campuses in particular. . .. In the antifeminist backlash against feminist teachers especially, we see a redirection of a generalized anxiety and anger about institutions that wield power but in highly obscure ways" (75). These resistances are not like those of Hesse's

students resisting a text that was not designed to be read by them. This resistance goes deeper even than Bleich's idea that students do not have the language. It is more akin to hooks's ideas about exchanges of power and if we once again remember Josh, who believes that feminism threatens the family, this resistance should not surprise us – not in the least.

Both male and female students can bristle at a group of feminist readings, and Janice M. Wolff encountered resistance to feminist readings in her course that was "designed to sensitize students to some of the larger problems in our culture…" (484). She calls it a sort of "ideological consciousness-raising" (484). The section of the course she writes about was entitled "The Status of Women." Since it was a writing class, Wolff asked students to respond to the feminist readings she supplied. The responses contained impassioned resistance. Her students used words such as "'very offensive', a 'bunch of baloney,' 'sarcastic in their approach,' 'totally ignorant,' 'absurd and annoying'" (485) to describe the readings and their authors. Wolff identified the student responses as resistance, and explored "how resistance might be used as an instrument of teaching" (486). In this article, Wolff shows us how to "interject teacherly counter-resistance" (490), through careful and thoughtful written responses to student writing. Always in the mode of asking questions and encouraging students to think about all sides of an issue, Wolff felt that she "challenge[d] illiberal, misogynistic reproduction of the dominant culture" (491). Wolff found that her own resistance to students' resistance forced her into her own critical thinking as she sought to use her students' resistance "as an instrument of

teaching" (486). This kind of resistance "compliments, cajoles, teases, and variously interferes with the student text" (491). It is "the place for more writing" (491).

As Kimberly Kay Gunter notes, "If feminist teachers are set on sparking social change, hoping to educate students about cultural differences and a theory that engages differences, urging those students to enter the broader world more tolerant and respectful of those differences, we can expect our classrooms to be messy" (187). Messy can be good if we work very hard to make those resistances productive.

Productive Resistance

Social psychologists Knowles and Linn believe that "resistance is the key element in persuasion" (vii). In a critical, twenty-first century writing class, we must remember this because as I noted earlier, resistance allows us (and our students) to investigate and to question before we are persuaded. Tormala and Petty take it one step further and note that, "as a process, resistance refers to the various mechanisms through which people prevent persuasive messages from changing their attitudes" (66). In the same volume, Knowles and Linn note that resistors become "less wary" (128) when their sense of self-esteem or confidence is built up. They state: "If a person feels efficacious and accomplished, these feelings imply that the person can overcome any difficulty. These indirect strategies reduce resistance by reducing the need to be resistant" (128). This should remind us of Shor's student centered class from Chapter 1. By giving students the power and control over their own education,

Shor helps his students build confidence. A 21st century critical teaching practice has at its center a student confidence that would reduce resistance.

In "Risks, Resistance, and Rewards: One Teacher's Story," Cecilia Rodriguez Milanes reminds us of the positive aspects of student resistance:

> Resistance may exert itself in blocking the class's collaborative/cooperative process; others resist through silence. Perhaps it is perverse to say it, but I have found myself looking forward to student resistance; it means that they are alive, awake. Resistance keeps me honed and on my toes – trying to find ways of usefully redirecting students' anger. Resistance teaches me; it leads to negotiation, communication. Negotiation in this alternative classroom attempts to avoid the confrontational, argumentative nature of debate in the traditional phallocentric view (115).

This critical and liberatory view is one that we should all take. We should design our classes expecting resistance and we should welcome it when it arises because it means that our students are alive, awake, and ready to learn.

Shor and Berlin deal with Resistance

Let us return to Shor and Berlin as exemplars and historiographers. Ira Shor regularly encountered many levels of resistance in his classes. Shor classifies the back of the class as "Siberia." He says, "… of those who avoid the teacher's desk at the front, some are more aggressively in exile than others (*When Students* 12). Shor writes, "In

the form of resistance represented by Siberian Syndrome, the students race for the corner seats reflects a micropolitical struggle between them and the teacher, and, more generally, a larger conflict between non-elite students and schooling in an unequal society" (*When Students* 14). Shor knows that he cannot end Siberian Syndrome easily because many students

> …do not want to share authority….don't like the negotiating process…don't know how to use authority or to negotiate the curriculum…don't understand the explanatory discourse [he] use[s] to introduce power sharing … don't trust [his] sincerity or the negotiation process even if it appeals to them … are reluctant to take public risks by speaking up in an unfamiliar process, because they are shy, or lack confidence …. (*When Students* 19)

The open-admissions climate and the working class student population present a particular kind of resistance due to their subject positions. Shor writes about the resistance worker-students present. He says that they

> react to college and other official moments of society with a highly armored, self-protective suspicion. Wary of teachers, even benign or radical ones, they may simply choose not to cooperate with democratic pedagogy. Many will not be able to notice or respond to an egalitarian mode in class. This will discourage teachers as well as those students. (*Critical Teaching* 35)

Yet Shor says, "It helps to remember that student-teacher conflicts are social problems. Students resist because daily life has made them justifiably mistrustful" (*Critical Teaching* 35). By understanding their resistance, Shor can make that resistance productive. He knows his audience and this knowledge points back to the crucial point from Chapter 1: teachers must know their students if they are to stimulate a critical and activist consciousness on the part of those students.

In his more privileged discourse community, Berlin observes the political implications of student resistance:

> . . . conservative forces insist on the imposition of a uniform set of texts and a monolithic set of reading and writing practices. These texts and practices are designed to reinforce the cultural hegemony of certain class, race, and gender groups at a time when this hegemony is being challenged in the daily encounters of ordinary citizens – citizens who inhabit a disparate array of cultural spaces. (xx)

In other words, depending on one's geographic location, students can come from very conservative backgrounds in which they are taught to reject any classroom practices that may be labeled "multicultural" or "critical." (Once again, remember Josh). Often students are taught the high culture/low culture binary split in high school, or they take cues from the general culture. In this way of thinking, students are taught to divide culture into "high culture" (xviii) (Shakespeare, Milton, etc) and "low culture" (Madonna, graffiti, etc). In this false binary, "high" culture is good and "low" culture

is bad (not worthy of study)[24]. Therefore, studying television or film is a thing to be resisted.

Like most of us, Berlin observes resistances in his classes: "For example, the majority of male students I have encountered at Purdue have in our first discussions assured me that race and gender inequalities no longer exist in the U.S. and simply do not merit further discussion" (*Rhetorics* 102). But this is an opportunity for learning. As Berlin says, "It is at the moment of denial that the role of the teacher as problem poser is crucial, providing methods for questioning that locate the points of conflict and contradiction" (*Rhetorics* 102). Having encountered so much resistance in his classrooms, Berlin, along with his graduate students, developed ways of dealing with it. Students are told that the class will "involve writing about the contradictions in our cultural codes" (*Rhetorics* 104). They are then asked to "draw up a set of rules to govern members in their relations to each other" (*Rhetorics* 104). These rules are published, and Berlin says that this "include[s] students in the operation of the class from the start…" (*Rhetorics* 104). It gives students an active stake in the class and discourages passivity and "inappropriate reactions" (*Rhetorics* 104).

Planning for Resistance

Jennifer Seibel Trainor conducted a case study of the resistance problem and her title, "Critical Pedagogy's 'Other': Constructions of Whiteness in Education for

[24] See Welch, *Electric Rhetoric,* for more on the binaries that permeate our culture, particularly her discussion of high art and low art on pages 62-66. Also see Berlin's explication of high culture and low culture in his introduction to *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures*, and his discussion of the rhetoric/poetic binary in Chapter 1.

Social Change," suggests that white students are "other" in a classroom utilizing critical pedagogy. She finds that many white, middle-class students actively resist a multicultural critical pedagogy and thus "block critical teachers from reaching their goals" (632). To make this into a productive resistance, we must listen to Trainor as she relates, "the damage that our failure to create rhetorical space for the construction of an anti-racist white identity does in terms of students readings of and responses to critical texts and pedagogy" (634). We must recognize that our attitudes and our efforts may encourage the resistance that we see so often in these kinds of classrooms. As Trainor suggests, "By creating rhetorical frames that demonize whiteness and white students, we may do more harm than good, may inadvertently perpetuate, even create, the very values that we seek to unravel in our teaching" (647). If we are part of the problem, we are also part of the solution.

We should attend to these concerns as critical and liberatory teachers. Trainor describes Paul, a white student who was unable to find "a positive articulation of his identity" (645) in class discussions and readings. He felt blamed, as a white man, by his classmates and the authors of the texts. Many instructors react to this kind of resistance by simply avoiding questions of race but when the issue is skirted, I believe that the silence screams loudly from the margins of the classroom. Shall we avoid issues of oppression because we fear the oppressor[25] will make everyone uncomfortable? My answer would be a resounding no! Yes, discomfort will exist when we address these issues, and we should welcome the discomfort as it stimulates

[25] Yes, I am suggesting that some of our students themselves are oppressors.

minds and becomes an incentive for learning. Yet, there is no reason to make the oppressor feel "other" if we construct a pedagogy in which we respond to all students with a Freirean kind of love. We must be very careful. We must recognize that many white men in our culture feel that society blames them for all its ills, and indeed, they are often vilified, sometimes rightfully so, sometimes not. We must be careful, but we must not give up in our quest to create activist ways of thinking.

Therefore, I look to those who have been successful, such as Georgina Hickey and Peggy G. Hargis, who learned the hard way that "the outlook of the eighties-babies generation can be a particularly painful source of frustration" (149) for an activist educator. As they describe a course they taught together, they call their course objectives "ambitious," for they wished to "encourage social activism as the logical extension of thinking critically" (150). However, they soon encountered resistance, as their students believed that activism was a thing of the past and that "activists were nonconformers, rule breakers, rabble-rousers, or in it for personal glory" (152). Even so, they deem the class to be unusually successful, and thus we should examine their pedagogy. A major goal was to teach critical thinking skills and that required students to "be open-minded enough to subject their personal opinions and beliefs" (150) to critical analysis. As they note, "Self-scrutiny and intellectual flexibility are the linchpins of critical thinking, but asking students to question their personal beliefs and to imagine other ways of thinking about the world invites feelings of uncertainty, frustration, and resistance. It also takes time" (150). Time is a key factor, and a baby-steps approach is essential.

Their class was interdisciplinary and team taught by a sociology and a history professor, yet, since it was a writing intensive class, the materials could easily be incorporated into a rhetoric and writing class. The teachers provided materials that mixed "primary documents, research monographs, documentaries, and guest speakers, with less scholarly sources such as memoirs, fiction, performance, visual art, and popular movies" (153). They "tried to create contradiction and dissonance in [students'] usual ways of thinking" (152). They did this by allowing students to express their personal beliefs and then complicating those expressions with "information or situations that appeared incongruent with their personal convictions" (152). They offered primary sources and discussed ways in which fiction did or did not do justice to actual events. They required students to "confront their personal beliefs" (153) by requiring them to reflect on how the events affected them personally. Although they could not reach all, many students responded to their pedagogy and we should take into account the careful attention that Hargis and Hickey paid to their middle-class white students. They used Freire's love for the oppressor and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development to reach students in an unusual way

Race and Resistance: A Pedagogy[26]

In Spring 2003, I enacted a critical and liberatory teaching plan in a first-year writing course at my research university. After several years of teaching this student population, I anticipated student resistance to my plan. I began by acknowledging to myself that prior to introducing material, a teacher absolutely must build a community of trust and openness in the classroom. Students must feel that their ideas are listened to and valued before a class can address oppression. Therefore, the first few weeks of class must focus on community building through Freirean dialogue.[27] As Freire notes, "Many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account . . . the men-in-a-situation to whom their program was ostensibly directed" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 75). As I stated earlier in this chapter, I agree with Berlin when he tells us that teachers must know their students: "The teacher must understand the unique economic, social, and cultural conditions of his or her students" (*Rhetorics* 104). This "enables sound planning likely to set a meaningful encounter in motion" (*Rhetorics* 104). Therefore, we must get to know our students

[26] This pedagogy obviously relied on disclosure for its success or failure and Swartzlander, et al question the validity of such pedagogy, especially when male teachers asking female students to disclose personal information. Since the "pedagogy of disclosure" has been widely discussed, I point to David Bleich's *Know and Tell: A Writing Pedagogy of Disclosure, Genre, and Membership.* As Bleich notes, "Disclosure is important because it has changed the teaching of writing, changed teaching, and changed how we give and get knowledge" (11). My students in this case were not exactly disclosing personal information, but they were being asked to disclose personal beliefs.

[27] Freire says that "founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 72).

and they must get to know each other so that an environment of trust can produce open communication.

Freire says that we must "present significant dimensions of an individual's contextual reality" (*Oppressed* 85), and once communication is established, the first stage in creating an activist conscience would relate to students immediate lives and what is going on around them – on their campus and campuses across the nation. For instance, in Fall 2002, members of Oklahoma State University fraternity Alpha Gamma Rho were suspended and the local fraternity was sanctioned by its national chapter for some of its white members donning black face and simulating a lynching scene (OSU Frat Members). The problem arose not only from the occurrence, but from photos that were posted on an Internet site. The Southern Poverty Law Center also posted the photos on its website with a news story about the incident. It is very important that students see the photograph of "a member in blackface wear[ing] a prisoner costume. Smiling, he stands between two frat brothers – one dressed in a Klan costume and the other clad in overalls and a confederate flag bandanna – as a mock noose dangles above his head" (Jim Crow Bizarre). While the news article expresses the shock and dismay of college officials, a letter from an AGR "brother" suggests that the fraternity members had no idea they were doing anything wrong. They were just "young men, having fun, no one was hurt, and above all nothing was meant by their actions" (Butler). This incident produced outrage among African American students, but many white students could not understand why it was so hurtful.

Applying Vygotsky's theory of layering and activity to and seeking to reach student's Zone of Proximal Development, the first layer of knowledge I applied asked students to write about the issue after reading the news story and the letter from Butler. This solitary activity encouraged students to express their views with no outside influence. As they reached into their own contextual reality, their initial reactions should be validated, and once students had a chance to record their thoughts, an oral discussion in small and larger groups ensued and moved into a higher stage of development by integrating reading, writing, and the oral/aural sense. I expected at this point that many students would agree with the letter writer, that the frat members were just having fun, and I was correct. I asked students to write a one page response to the issue. While a few were outraged, most of the students responded exactly as I had expected – with their own rhetorics of resistance. They wrote that the problems are all in the past and things are very different now. Some of the white males took it personally and wrote that everyone accuses them of racism because they are white. Others thought that the prank was insensitive, but blown out of proportion.

In this approach which involves proceeding by small steps, it is important for the instructor to realize that many white male students, especially fraternity members, will identify with the Alpha Gamma Rho members. The student responses were to be expected and were okay – for the moment.

The next layer of activity asked students to go to an historical account of lynching. They read portions of Ida B. Wells's *Southern Horrors and Other*

Writings. While excerpts from "A Red Record" offer students both an example of an extraordinary activist and examples of lynching that were possibly left out of their education, keeping Zone of Proximal Development in mind, I chose another excerpt. In "A Red Record," Wells's argument centers on the hypocrisy of the Southern White man as she argues that these men only accused black men of raping white women after they were no longer slaves (and thus no longer property) (79). Wells offers disturbing statistics of lynchings that occurred in the 19th century and the reasons for those lynchings such as "insulting whites," "no offense," and "turning states evidence." (85-87). She then offers equally disturbing narratives of torture, injustice, murder of children, and more. However, her language in "A Red Record" is particularly critical of white men. She writes of their barbarism and their hypocrisy against Northern white women who came to the South to teach. She writes that they were called "'N*** teachers'—unpardonable offenders in the social ethics of the South, and were insulted, persecuted and ostracized, not by Negroes, but by the white manhood which boasts of its chivalry towards women" (81). Wells convicts the Southern white man of hypocrisy in a virulent manner and unfortunately, a few students might identify with the Southern white man. Paul, from Trainor's article would probably say that Wells is a racist. That is why "A Red Record" with its brilliant rhetoric is not the correct text for this layer. "Mob Rule in New Orleans" unfolds a narrative that never convicts the white race, it simply tells a story. With ZPD in mind, this narrative, which includes the story of Edward McCarthy, a white

man who was fined $25 or 30 days for saying that "he considered a Negro as good as a white in body and soul" (182).

Some may say that my suggestions coddle white students and that revising a course plan with racist white students in mind is indefensible. My intention was not to coddle anyone, but simply to reach their Zone of Proximal Development so that they could be moved beyond their own resistance. I wanted to make their resistance productive and if the knowledge were layered in a careful way, taking into account ALL students in a classroom, perhaps an activist consciousness could be ignited. Such narratives would move the soul of all but the most hardhearted student, and as Freire notes, "the process of searching for the meaningful thematics should include a concern for the links between themes a concern to pose these themes as problems, and a concern for their historical-cultural context" (89). My practice always encouraged students to make connections and to move forward in an activity of the mind.

Visual Layers

Once students had written and voiced their feelings and were exposed to Wells's historical narratives, and the links between the two, I brought them back to the present time with a brief but disturbing clip from the movie "Swordfish." In a recent CCCC presentation, Joyce Middleton noted that Halle Berry, the lone black woman in the film, is hung, almost to her death by a group of white men (Middleton). The scene, cleverly entitled "Ginger Snapped," features John Travolta as the ultimate

bad guy. The context is not important, except to say that he is trying to get Hugh Jackman to transfer a large amount of money. In this scene, Travolta has Berry brought out, and a rope is thrown over a rafter and a noose is made. Two white men place the noose over Berry's neck as she struggles to get away. A switch is flipped and in a high-tech lynching, Berry is hoisted via a pulley, into the air. Her feet are seen kicking in the foreground as Jackman hurries to type computer code. She is then seen hanging and struggling in the background as tension builds. As money is transferred via computer, her coughing and gagging can be heard. The money transfer is made; Berry is brought down and immediately shot to death. In her final scene, the camera circles her body, with the noose still around her neck. With their layers of knowledge, students should at this point understand why Middleton would be disturbed by the scene. They wrote about this scene, after having been given a few basics of film theory. In a full class discussion, I made sure they understood the basics of the mise-en-scene, the importance of sound and possibly the significance of the use of color. I then placed students in groups of three so that they could learn from each other in Vygotsky's human interaction. Oral reports from groups concretized the knowledge as students combined thought, language, visual, and sound to produce a new layer of development. Layers still must be added, however, for a thorough understanding of the problem. This is where the documentary comes in.

A PBS documentary film series entitled "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow" offers a section on lynching that added to students' layers of knowledge. After previous reading, media, and discussion, students ZPD was such that they could

watch short clips of the documentary without too much resistance. I encouraged students to critique the way that the information is presented in the documentary. They critiqued the way that the narrator speaks, and the music that plays in the background. They looked at the way that the documentary was put together and the layering of the scenes, through editing and camera angles.

After viewing and discussing the documentary clips, students were given a chance to find information on the World Wide Web. Many narratives are available on different websites, with the most comprehensive being the site that PBS put together for its Jim Crow series. This site offers narratives by the real actors of events and tales handed down through the generations. My students were directed to the PBS website and each student or group of students chose a narrative to download. The site contains a sound clip of Wilhelmina Baldwin talking about her memories of the curfew laws in her hometown in Georgia. She says that "run of the mill blacks" were required to be off the streets by 9:30 and "educated blacks" could stay out later – until 10:30 (Baldwin). Since students are often disturbed by hometown curfew laws, they could compare Baldwin's situation to their own. One such narrative about Ida B. Wells became an interesting exercise for students because it is narrated by a white woman. Students critiqued the presentation and what it meant for a white woman to present this story. Many, many others are available for students to peruse, along with primary documents. The site contains an interactive map that shows the number of lynchings of blacks and whites in each state. Students can see the number of lynchings for their home state and the disturbing racial differences between

northern states and southern states. They can peruse race riot statistics and consult a link to the Oklahoma Historical Society that contains pictures and documents about the 1921 Tulsa Race Riots.[28] Groups of students presented material to the class in an effort to layer even further knowledge[29].

In a last step, I asked students to return to their previous response to the OSU fraternity case. I theorized that students would have accumulated layers of knowledge and understanding after the immersion in the sounds and sights of lynching and that their ZPD would have moved so that the resistances could blossom into understanding and activism. By being careful not to move past a resistant student's ZPD, perhaps he or she can be moved closer to developing an activist sensibility that would stay with him or her.

After completing the unit, I asked students to write about the issue again. The results were encouraging. Many students wrote that their view had changed. As they learned the history of lynching, they understood why the actions were offensive to many. Some, who condemned the actions in the first place, wrote that they felt even stronger in their opinions. Some said they were learning to write with more of an open mind. But of course, we cannot reach 100% of the students 100% of the time. At least one student said that his view didn't change because we can't go back and change history. This student believed that people should just grow up and move on.

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[28] This particular link is important for my teaching location in Oklahoma so that students can see that these things happened in their home state, not so long ago. The website offers a thorough history of all states so that teachers in other locations can contextualize the history for their students as well.

[29] See the PBS Website, "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow," Http://www.pbs.org/hnet/jimcrow

As a rhetorical act of resistance, I will never know for sure that my critical and liberatory teaching practice truly transformed my students. As long as I wield the grade, some will tell me what I want to hear. I learned that no matter how carefully I construct pedagogy, I cannot change everyone. Yet, the merger and collision of my rhetorics, Ida B. Wells's rhetorics, and those of my students produced more knowledge, new knowledge, and a deeper understanding of resistance, racism, and love.

Global Resistances

A different kind of resistance can emerge in the classroom – one that is quite different from the previous scene of lynching. Sometimes, the resistances can be quite encouraging. It is important for teachers to recognize both positive and negative resistances so that they can become productive. An example of an encouraging kind of student resistance is related below. This example shows that no matter how much we plan, students will surprise us with their insight and their resistances.

In "Globalization, September 11, and the Restructuring of Education," Douglas Kellner writes that "a critical theory of globalization presents it as a force of capitalism and democracy, as a set of forces imposed from above, in conjunction with resistance from below" (108). This is the definition I had in mind when I taught a course focused on global education.

In Spring 2005, I was asked to participate in Oklahoma Global Education Consortium (OGEC) activities by encouraging students to submit essays for the 2005

essay contest. The purpose of the OGEC, as stated on its website, is as follows: "to foster collaboration between institutions to achieve the goal of preparing individuals and communities to participate in the global society and economy" (OGEC). With its annual essay contest and conference, the organization offers opportunities for students and teachers to showcase their global education activities.

Unfortunately, the Consortium only takes into account the set of forces imposed from above – not the resistance from below. Thus, my task was to participate in OGEC activities, while incorporating a critical theory of globalization similar to Kellner's. From the winning essays posted on the website, the Consortium seems to assume that if we only pay attention to global education issues, then we can all hold hands and sing kum-bah-yah.[30]

To contextualize the course, I must explain that I taught in an open admissions two year branch of a State University. Anyone who wanted to enroll in an honors section was welcome in this course – there were no test score or performance requirements. This created a diverse student population indeed. Some of the students were high in aptitude and achievement. Some were only high in desire to achieve. This created a wide range of writing abilities and verbal responses to discussion questions.

While I expected the wide range of abilities, I had no way of knowing that I would encounter such a wide range of subjectivities. Students in the class were from

[30] The website never defines global education – it simply shows pictures from previous conferences that glorify events such as eating kolaches as examples of global education.

many countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya, Cameroon, and Mexico. The class also included a smattering of Native American, African American, and White students. Among the White students, there were several traditional male students, at least one fundamentalist Christian woman, two proponents of Darwinism, one hard-core feminist, one Buddhist. Needless to say, I have NEVER encountered such a diverse group of individuals. I was honored and excited to be in the classroom with these 30 individuals each and every Tuesday and Thursday.

When designing the course, I expected the normal resistances and I planned to turn those resistances into opportunities. My goal was to educate students on issues that exist around the world as they became more effective writers. As with the 2003 course, I hoped to ignite a critical and activist consciousness. I used readings from the textbook,[31] and those readings included pieces on AIDS in Africa, lack of water in Bangladesh, Hawaiian culture, Buddhism in the U.S., and more. As expected, a few students resisted the course and the readings. They complained that the readings were depressing and that they needed to read something more uplifting. Two traditional white male students refused to participate in class, either verbally or in writing. They just sat there, daring anyone to talk to them. They seemed totally unconcerned with their grades and with learning and when confronted, they said the subject just wasn't interesting to them.[32] I don't know why they remained in the class. These resistances were expected and were, for the most part, taken care of by peers in the class. It's

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[31] Watters, Ann ed. *Global Exchange: Reading and Writing in a World Context.* Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

[32] One of them approached me during the last week of class and asked if he could do extra credit work to raise his grade. I refused.

difficult to tell an African woman that you don't care about African issues, or to tell a Buddhist that his religion is not important. Had this been an all-white class like the previous course, I would have responded actively to their resistance. However, my diverse student population resisted the resistors in a way that they did not expect.

The course was a fascinating exercise in resistance and audience theory as I asked students to enter the OGEC essay contest. Entering the contest was my own act of resistance, for I was greatly disturbed by the Utopian feel of the website. We had spent a few weeks discussing global issues and students were ready to write their thoughts. However, when we began to examine the webpage and previous contest winners, students could see that the OGEC was not interested in essays that critically examined the issues. When offered a potential $200 prize, and possible publication of their work, students were surprisingly compliant. I encouraged them in their subversive operations and they wrote what the OGEC wanted to hear. But they were prepared to critically examine the topic and to resist the OGEC with resistance from below. After our subversive and utopian essays were safely in the mail, I gave students the opportunity to write the same essay with the class as an audience. The acts of resistance were encouraging indeed.[33]

Conclusions

Thus, resistance can manifest in many different ways and a vigilant critical and liberatory teacher can use resistance in a productive manner. It need not be a negative

[33]I reiterate that resistance here is very different from the previous scene on lynching, and unfortunately, I cannot include the students' writing in this dissertation.

topic; in fact, using resistance has become an interesting way of making the writing and rhetoric class have even more of an impact on students' writing and thinking abilities. My global education class should serve as a model for a 21st century critical teaching practice. Although I put together the syllabus, the readings, and the goals for this course, the students took the course into the realm of the critical, liberatory, activist, and multicultural in a unique and unpredictable way.

While this chapter has related my own experiences, it is also important to seek out the experience of others. In the next chapter, I do just that as I seek to determine how a critical 21st century writing and rhetoric teacher begins, grows, and learns. Through the story of "Kyle," I relate theory and practice that should help all teachers examine their own attitude and effectiveness

Chapter 3:

The Attitudes and Attributes of a 21st century Critical Teacher

My approach in this chapter can best be described by Kay Halasek's dialogical approach which "allows us to compare claims and assumptions, as well as to engage alternative ways of seeing, freeing us from the confines of pedagogical, theoretical or even epistemological consistency" (20). This chapter will answer the question, "How does a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher begin and evolve?" To address the question, I briefly summarize one of many guiding theories for my own teaching – that of George Hillocks, Jr. Specifically in *Ways of Knowing, Ways of Teaching*, Hillocks takes a Freirean/Vygotskian attitude, and offers a practical, yet theorized guide specifically for the writing and rhetoric classroom of the 21st century.

With Hillocks firmly in place, I further address the question through the story of Kyle[34]. I knew Kyle through his first year of teaching and beyond. It is exciting to follow a fresh, new, teacher through an exceptional first year. Kyle was and is an extraordinary teacher, and from the beginning, he enacted a critical teaching theory for the 21st century. This chapter will theorize Kyle's performance as a first-year teacher. It will take into account his training, his background, and his unique theoretical perspective. Kyle is a model for new and experienced writing and rhetoric

[34] Although he is based on a real character, "Kyle" is a fiction.

teachers and he offers an example of how a teacher can use training, theory, and practice.

Hillocks in the 21st Century Classroom.

As a context for examining Kyle's teaching, let us apply Freirean ideas to the 21st century writing and rhetoric class through the work of George Hillocks Jr's *Ways of Thinking, Ways of Teaching.* In my mind, this 1999 text is a kind of non-political Freirean theory put together with a dash of Vygotsky's theory of learning. In this text, Hillocks' main purpose is to address school reform and in doing so, he conducts a study involving teaching writing and rhetoric and analyzing teachers of writing and rhetoric. The study brings to life many teachers whose attitudes and ideas are illustrative of exemplary practices. He also shows less effective teaching practices for contrast. The section on teacher types discusses the attitudes and attributes that Hillocks has found most effective and provides grounding as we theorize Kyle's first-semester performance.

To highlight differences among teachers, Hillocks observes their classes and reproduces transcripts. Two writing and rhetoric teachers, Professor Wade and Mr. Gow show contrasting approaches, and the differences in these two teachers demonstrate a fundamental difference between teachers everywhere. One of the items that Hillocks measures is teacher talk-time, that is, how much time does the teacher spend talking and how much do the students talk? In the end, Hillocks shows that Professor Wade has talked for 41 minutes of the 50-minute class period, or 72%

of the transcript lines (9). In contrast, Mr. Gow has talked for approximately 9% of the transcript lines (15). The difference in the two teachers demonstrates a fundamental difference between teachers everywhere. Professor Wade believes that "teaching is tantamount to telling" (18). Hillocks calls this "objectivist" and Freireans can recognize it as a kind of "Banking" education. On the contrary, Mr. Gow believes that "what is learned may only be learned in terms of what we already know and that learners must construct what is to be learned for themselves" (19). Hillocks calls this "constructivist" and we will soon recognize that Kyle is more constructivist than objectivist.

Hillocks further writes of the kinds of knowledge that students gain from the different teaching strategies. In a monologic class, where the teacher "tells" the students (banking), the knowledge is "declarative" (27). Students are expected to absorb what the teacher is telling them, and then go write an effective paper:

> when the teacher is talking most of the time, the knowledge is certain to be declarative. The teacher is in the process of announcing what students presumably should learn. The assumption is that if students hear it, they should be able to learn it and act on it. However, we have considerable research demonstrating that such instruction has little effect on learning. . . (38)

However, when the student's responses are the center of attention, and students not only "affect the course of the discussion, they are the discussion" (27), they gain

procedural knowledge – not just **what** but **how**. Procedural knowledge occurs when students learn by doing.

Hillocks knows that the different teaching strategies involve different levels of risk for teachers:

> If I hand out the knowledge to be learned, I can hold my students responsible for that knowledge in very specific ways. . . But if I am to teach how to write effective essays on topics or with points of view I have not even considered, and if I believe that precise rules for writing such an essay (e.g., the five-paragraph theme) are inappropriate, then I cannot simply lecture on topics and form and be done with it. . . If I assume that what students learn is in part dependent on what they bring to the learning, how the class members interact, how well I am able to manage those sometimes evanescent interactions, and other open-ended processes, then I cannot control classroom events in the way I can control a lecture. (42)

Indeed, a student-centered classroom is more difficult to manage, and giving up "control" is quite difficult for many teachers. However, a 21st century critical rhetoric and writing teacher does the hard work that is necessary for students to learn, develop, and grow, as writers and as citizens.[35]

Hillocks believes that teacher attitudes and beliefs about students are major factors for differences among teachers (42). He categorizes teachers as either

[35] See also page 23 in which I discuss Linda Woodbridge's view about the hard work involved in a student-centered class discussion.

optimistic or non-optimistic, based on statements they made about their students. He concluded that, "in some cases, nonoptimistic statements seemed to be linked with high levels of declarative knowledge, high levels of frontal teaching, and what appeared to be simplification of subject matter" (43). Non-optimistic teachers make statements about students' abilities, problems, and weaknesses. For example, a non-optimistic teacher stated the following on the subject of student's grammar issues: "I got tired, so sick and tired of seeing so many faults along that line. I wanted to see if I could do a better job in that regard and maybe cut down on some of those faulty expressions in their writing" (43).

On the other hand, optimistic teachers "often made direct positive statements about their students" (44). The optimistic teacher believes that students are important and that they can achieve. The optimistic teacher shows a Freirean kind of love in that he/she recognizes that students in open-admissions settings often have lives, children, and/or jobs. The optimistic teacher reveals faith that all students can learn, as the following statement shows:

> What's so unusual again is that class is so good. The people in that, that class has an older median age than my other classes, and so . . . they're fun people. And they're coming from their jobs and that sort of thing . . . They're very serious. . . Then you have the younger students who are more interested in each other and that sort of thing, and that's kind of fun, really. (45)

This teacher finds value in different kinds of students, and finding value is what optimistic teaching is all about. Hillocks finds that "optimistic teachers spend nearly twice as much instructional time on procedural knowledge and nearly 14 times as much on procedural knowledge as related to substance as do non-optimistic teachers" (52).

In my mind, a high level of optimism is the most important attribute that a teacher can possess. Teachers should believe in their students and they should expect their students to succeed. Optimism can be contagious, and unfortunately, non-optimism can also be contagious and break-room conversations can be quite telling. My advice to teachers would be to watch what you say about your students. If break-room conversations regularly revolve around students lack of aptitude, their inability to learn, or their lack of desire to follow directions, an optimistic teacher could change those conversations to revolve around faith in students' abilities and aptitudes.

Reflective Teaching

Hillocks reminds us that teacher attitude is strongly related to reflective teaching practices and that optimistic teachers are much more able to evaluate student progress, consider possible revisions to the lesson plan, and take action to make change (132):

> Because optimistic teachers . . . assume that students will learn under appropriate circumstances, and because they understand that students must be engaged in the construction of their own knowledge, they set

> about developing activities that will allow students to do just that. Because their activities allow students to respond frequently in class to a variety of factors, they are also privy to what students are doing in response to the activity and what they seem to be thinking. Given this openness, such teachers are able to evaluate progress, consider possible revisions in the activity or the store of ideas available, and take action to facilitate change in their students even while they work. (132)

Engagement is a crucial idea in the writing and rhetoric classroom. If students are engaged, they learn, if they are unengaged, they don't. A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher insists on engagement and this is a key term we will recognize as we move to an examination of Kyle's teaching journal. The next section will analyze Kyle's teaching journal and will focus on his first semester. The eloquence, the engagement, and the optimism will speak for itself.

Kyle's First Semester

Bell hooks writes, "Making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy" (*Teaching to Transgress* 39). Learning should be "exciting, sometimes even fun" (*Teaching* 7) according to hooks. Yet teachers do not acquire these attributes in a vacuum; they must be trained (in theory and practice), they must be experienced (in theory and practice), and they must have the desire to make a

classroom experience into a transformative experience. As a follower of both Hillocks and hooks, Kyle shows these statements to be quite significant.

Although I did not conduct a formal study with Kyle, I closely observed his process over the semester. We exchanged e-mail quite often on the topic of teaching and he would write his concerns, questions, attitudes, and successes. Often his responses were two to three pages long and would begin a weekend conversation about teaching. Because the first semester was so successful and because we both learned so much, Kyle and I continued our e-mail and personal conversations. In addition, Kyle kept a teaching journal and he generously made those journals available for this project. The eloquence and the sound theoretical practices that are available through perusal of these journals assure that we can continue to learn from Kyle as we observe his growth as a 21st century critical teacher.

Teaching Journals as 21st Century Reflective Practice

In *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice,* Hillocks says that a reflective practice "permits the practitioner to learn through practice, not simply trial and error, an expression that suggests a kind of randomness that does not allow for the building of knowledge" (*Teaching* 28). Hillocks further defines reflective teaching:

> Active critical reflection is necessary in every aspect of our teaching, not only in front of a class. We must try to reevaluate our own values and experiences as they relate to our teaching. Our assumptions and theories about teaching composition must remain open to inspection,

> evaluation, and revision, a condition that requires an active inquiry paralleling the inquiry in which we engage our students. (217)

With this imperative in mind, a teaching journal can encourage reflective practice. A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher keeps a teaching journal, and an important aspect of Kyle's success became apparent through his journal. This journal aided in his reflective process and helped him to focus on successes as well as to analyze and enact necessary improvements.

Teaching journals allow teachers to combine theory and practice, and in "Recent Trends in TA Instruction: A Bibliographic Essay," Stephen Wilhoit points to the importance of these journals, especially for new teachers: "Documenting their experiences as instructors through teaching journals and portfolios enables TAs to reflect on their growth, express their anxieties, formulate their educational philosophies, and critique their classroom performance" (21). In addition, seasoned teachers may not remember the details of those first few semesters of teaching, and journals can document struggles, frustrations, and successes. Thus, a teaching journal can become an important site of reflection, inquiry, and growth for any teacher.

The traditional form of reflection and improvement has been the classroom observation and most of us welcome a colleague or a supervisor into our classroom and eagerly anticipate feedback and advice. However, Michael A. Gee reminds us that when being observed, (especially for evaluative purposes), most teachers pull out our very best tried and true lesson plans and thus our peer observer is not with us as we struggle alone, "taking chances" and needing observation and feedback (Gee 26).

Gee writes of having a conscience which in his mind is "all about ability; the ability to learn and make good decisions by recognizing the distinction between what is right and what is wrong" (26). Gee uses a teaching journal (he calls it an "Academic Journal"), which he says

> is great for helping one to acquire this ability and turn it into an introspective teaching aid. The keeping of such a journal inspires the continual evaluation of unrehearsed classes to help a teacher get down to the true heart of what personally works in a classroom. (26)

Like many of us, Gee had trusted his memory to keep track of what went well, what was boring, what caused students to perk up. Yet, one day, he heard himself telling students that "the act of putting one's observations into words could increase one's insight and lead to wonderful discoveries" (27). He took his own advice, and as he began to keep track of what was said in the classroom and after class, he was able to develop more effective assignments, including a Service Learning component (28). Students can push teachers to a higher ZPD, thus causing thought and language to combine in teaching journals and bringing teaching practice to higher levels of effectiveness and engagement with students.[36]

These kinds of journals can help all beginning teachers in the 21st century to become critical and reflective. Jane Peterson writes of the ways she learns from self-assigned journal entries that "deepen [her] respect for students" (32). Peterson writes about students and the impact they have had on her. Due to these journals, her

[36] It is usually the teacher pushing the student's ZPD, so this inverted situation is significant indeed.

"respect for students deepens and [her] sense of [herself] as a learner grows" (34). In addition, as Wilhoit notes, "If new TAs learn to reflect on their teaching practices assess the effectiveness of their teaching, and consider alternative pedagogies that might improve the instruction they offer their students, they will continue to grow as teachers throughout their careers" (21). As they grow, critical rhetoric and writing teachers of the 21st century will show concern for their students as did Kyle.

Early Journals on Training and Preparation

Kyle's journal does all of this and through analysis of the journals, I could see his evolution as he became a 21st century critical teacher. His first formal entry shows his lifelong preparation for teaching:

> In many ways I've been preparing to be a teacher for quite some time. In the third grade, I saw a film and read an article about an African American teacher in Chicago – Marva Collins. Starting then, I wanted to teach, because even at that young age, I saw one individual's power for positive change.

As a Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy graduate student and admitted overachiever, Kyle feels that he is ready to begin teaching. In addition, Kyle commented more than once that his teaching journal had helped him express his frustrations and to apply theory to his practice.

In an early journal entry, Kyle is concerned about students who are faltering: "I am seeing for the first time how the Greek system can be negative. Their Thursday night activities rob my Friday classrooms. I can see how some instructors could become concerned, or even disgusted." A non-optimistic teacher might make negative comments in class about the Greek system or might not realize (or care) how powerful the peer pressure is in such a system. However, as a critical teacher who is into reflective teaching practice, Kyle completes Hillocks's "ongoing analysis of student progress in terms of the course goals" (34), and his analysis points to Thursday night Greek activities as problematic. Students are sleepy and hungover. Or they don't show up for class at all. Of course, Kyle cannot change the Greek system but he can be aware of issues that are beyond his control. As an optimistic, caring, and reflective teacher, Kyle takes it personally when students are not at their best due to their Thursday evening behavior. This is because he cares for and respects the souls of his students.[37]

New GTAs in Kyle's department are required to attend a three-week workshop prior to the beginning of the Fall semester. Following the workshop, they are required to take English 5113, "Teaching College Composition" during their first semester of teaching. The workshop and course are intense and focused because they may be some students' only exposure to crucial writing and rhetoric theories. Michael C. Flanigan describes the workshop in his article, "From Discomfort, Isolation, and Fear to Comfort, Community, and Confidence: Using Reflection, Role-

[37] See hooks, *Teaching to Transgress,* 13.

Playing, and Classroom Observation to Prepare New Teachers of College Writing." He writes that the workshop focuses

> on four basic goals: (1) Making them comfortable with us and with one another; (2) creating a sense of community; (3) giving them frequent opportunities to reflect on what we've done in the workshop, on how they feel, and on how we as a group could improve what we are doing together; and (4) creating frequent opportunities to generate course materials and to work actively with ideas, concepts, and strategies. (243)

As Flanigan further notes, the workshop activities "emphasize that planning and reflection are central to effective teaching" (251). Flanigan tells us that "by the end of the summer workshop and the 'Teaching College Composition' course, new TAs have gained considerable experience" (251). These first few weeks are crucial and if a teacher receives critical training at this time, they will more successful and thus more effective teachers. Many teachers with five or more years of experience who were fortunate enough to benefit from training such as this tell me that they still use the techniques, methods, and theories that they were taught in the first few weeks.

While Kyle benefited greatly from the workshop, he was uniquely prepared for critical teaching through graduate seminars that utilized critical composition pedagogy. When asked about his success, Kyle states that being a student for so many years has helped form his perspective. He speaks of his many inspiring teachers, and one in particular. The Professor of Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy

who taught writing and rhetoric by decentering her own classroom, and by encouraging student voices through collaboration, group work, and feminist principles offered Kyle a model for the best of critical teaching. Kyle states in his journal that this professor "has been instructing me on how to teach for YEARS." In addition, he has seen some bad examples who "taught me what not to do." Unfortunately, a student centered pedagogy is not the norm for graduate seminars and most of us have attended graduate level seminars in which the teacher does all of the talking. Sally Barr Ebest asks, "Why hasn't composition pedagogy been adopted in graduate composition seminars?" (204). All teachers of writing and rhetoric should have the opportunity to see critical composition pedagogy from the student's perspective and I would call for those who teach graduate level seminars to seriously consider decentering their classrooms. Kyle knows that "engagement is possible for most students" (Hillocks, *Teaching,* 21), because he has been taught by one who insists on engagement.

In his first few weeks of teaching, Kyle's unique grasp of theory shows as he already expresses concerns about decentering his new unit. His concerns waiver back and forth between teaching and students as he says: "Students don't want to invent. They want to be given a topic," and then his concerns about himself intertwine with concerns about teaching: "I don't know if it is normal, but I think I need to establish a kind of "Philosophy of Teaching" that I can refer to as evidence of why I do what I do. I think that my strategies are highly informed by feminist theory, but there are other theories involved as well." A 21st century critical teacher knows theory and

applies it to the classroom. Kyle feels that he must justify his actions with theory because the relationships between research, theory, and practice are quite "complex" (Hillocks, *Teaching* 28).

After the dialogue of the workshop, it was time for Kyle to put belief into action. He had begun his new endeavor without the usual case of nerves. He felt comfortable and prepared due to the intensity of the above-mentioned three-week workshop. However, his focus in the early days is clearly not upon critical teaching theory – he is worried about the usual new teacher issues – "will my hands shake?" -- "will I run out of material?" He says, "I really didn't get hit with nerves until around five minutes before class. I felt as if I were going to walk into class and they would immediately know it was all a sham – that I was a hack." Those fears, however, were quickly put to rest, as Kyle the student became Kyle the teacher;

> After my two classes on Monday, I had the strangest sensation when walking across campus after getting my third cup of morning coffee. When I looked at the other students, I realized that before today – I would've seen them as peers. After teaching my classes, I knew that I wasn't. I suppose I began immediately negotiating between Kyle the Student and Kyle the Teacher. I don't think I will or would ever become just one of the two…

By the end of the week, Kyle clearly takes everything that happens in the classroom personally: "I had two students absent on Friday from the same class. I worried that I had done something. Had I been too hard? Had I not done enough?" Yet, even at

this early stage, he wants to place belief and action on the same plane of existence and to establish a trusting relationship with his students. It worries him that his students don't immediately trust him:

> I did have one student write in their diagnostic essay that he felt some teachers felt like they had to 'prove something' on the first couple of days. I wondered if that was me? If he saw that I was trying to 'prove' myself. And he may be right. But to whom am I attempting to prove my worth and authority in class? To myself, of course.

He is clearly questioning his own adequacy.

Jane Peterson is interested in Freire's conditions that are necessary for dialogue and the attitudes of a dialogic teacher. The attitudes are: critical thinking, of course, but also the conditions of love, humility, faith, mutual trust, and hope. The next section discusses these five conditions as they are put forth by Freire, defined by Peterson, and the ways in which they arise in Kyle's teaching.

Love and Diversity in the Writing and Rhetoric class

Peterson says that Love is a "commitment to others; a basic attitude or orientation toward people, the world, and life that requires courage" (29). In a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class, this kind of love is often expressed through embracing diversity. This section will discuss diversity in the classroom, especially race and gender. Diversity was a major question for Kyle from the beginning and it

should always be in the forefront of a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teaching practice.

In the early part of the first semester, Kyle voices concern about being a white male, and how that might affect the women and people of other races in the class. This is a courageous act for a first-year teacher, and the first sign that Kyle is becoming a critical teacher. He shows concern for the subjectivities present in the classroom. An avowed feminist, Kyle is very much attuned to the subject position of women in a college classroom and he is also sensitive to issues of race. He is concerned about these issues because he has read what bell hooks has to say about teachers, whiteness, feminism, and race. He also knows basic feminist theory, not because he has taken a class, but because he has read feminist theory from the writings of Helene Cixous to Patricia Hill Collins to Gloria Anzaldua to hooks and everything in between. He reads on his own, often enjoys discussion with like-minded peers, and has committed to ending oppression through understanding.

As Beverly Moss and Keith Walters write in "Rethinking Diversity," issues of diversity

> challenge us to give great thought to who we are, why we use language as we do in our professional and private lives, and what roles language and literacy play in the construction of our identity as well as the identities of those we believe to be similar to and different from us – inside and outside the classroom. (135)

As Moss and Walters write, teaching methods "are not value free; rather, they entail assumptions about using spoken and written language that may not be shared by everyone who enters the classroom door" (141). As one who has always been sensitive to issues of subjectivity, this comes easy for Kyle. But others may not have prior exposure to race and gender studies and thus need to be instructed about these issues prior to entering the classroom.

This should remind us of Kathleen Welch's 1999 call for "Race and gender issues ….to be worked into the very fabric of the education of logos users" (Electric 129). All students and teachers are raced and gendered beings and ignoring such issues ignores the very essence of one's subjectivity. Welch calls for students "to become aware of the histories in their heads and of how they relate to their articulations as intersubjective performances within discourse communities" (Electric 70). This requires a dedicated kind of courage and love on the part of the teacher. Welch further calls for "careful, intense instruction in the production of discourse as a way of negotiating unpredictable issues – issues such as judgment, passion, and sensibility – that confront human beings throughout life" (70). Only planning, awareness, and commitment can create this kind of love in the classroom.

Similarly, hooks reminds us that "…the professor must genuinely value everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes" (*Teaching* 8). There can be no false love – the value must be genuine. If a teacher does not genuinely feel the love and value for her students, the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teaching

practice will fall short. The teacher will only be going through the motions and that is not enough. This kind of true caring will inspire a true respect for students, and as hooks further notes: "To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (*Teaching* 13). When Kyle states that he sees students not as vessels to be filled, but as landscapes, he shows the kind of value that hooks relates. As we see students in this way, writes Peterson, we develop a "new respect for them, one which enables us to envision the student-teacher relationship as a partnership in learning" (17). Kyle shows this kind of respect through his expectations: "I expect them to become an effective discourse community – to start working and interacting, as opposed to holding forth . . . I do expect a great deal of respect from them – I can expect this and must, or how will they expect it of themselves?" In his respect and understanding, Kyle expects much of himself, as well: "Of myself, I expect flexibility and patients. These are characteristics that have never come natural to me."

In his journal, Kyle writes of an African American student in his second hour: "He wrote his position paper on 'Is There a White University? And if so, is This University White?'… I talked a bit about whiteness studies and the fact that his essay was falling in line with a whole new line of inquiry." Kyle went out of his way for this student, as he would for any student. At the end of the semester, he got this note:

> I really appreciate the time you spent on looking over my paper.
>
> Every student has that special teacher that he or she really admires,

> and you are mine. Ever since day one, you have always been different from my other teachers. You always seemed more in tune with the wants and needs of your students. Thanks for a great year and have a fun and safe Christmas Holiday. . ..

Kyle writes,

> And God that's what makes it worth it. Every night at 2 a.m. still grading to try to get things out – all of the balancing acts that so many of us perform – lamenting over the bad days and struggling to make the next day better – wanting to vomit if you have to say 'parenthetical citation' one more time – because you broke through. . ..

Humility and Reflection in the Writing and Rhetoric Classroom

Peterson defines Freirean humility as, "acknowledgement of one's own limits; a willingness to learn from and with others; openness" (29). This kind of humility and openness would demonstrate reflective teaching at its finest. This humility and openness merge with Hillocks's optimistic teacher and the student centered classroom where "The students responses become the center of attention" (Ways 27). The important difference between this class and an average, everyday, classroom is that students are engaged rather than told (Ways 29).[38]

[38] I hope that soon, the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class will become the "average everyday class."

Humility often manifests itself in the form of a student-centered classroom, for a teacher with an ego can never give up the power and control. Amazingly, in his first semester of teaching, Kyle had students construct the syllabus for the second unit. He says:

> I think this is a smart idea. However, I have no real plan to go from – which is part of the deal. To let students have a hand in shaping the curriculum for unit two (which I believe is correct) means giving up a certain sense of security. It means giving up the security of a lesson plan that is mine – that is determined by me – and that I'm comfortable with. But, as students learn, they are often uncomfortable, I think. Each lesson brings new ideas and processes – new things to learn. Why should this not be the same for me? I was given a quote – can't remember who said it – "If your writing doesn't keep you up nights, it won't keep anyone else up either." I figure if students are learning – if students are undergoing the discomfort involved in stretching and developing – and if I'm not stretching and developing too, but instead, grip even tighter to my typed up plan for the day – we're all suffering in the end.

Close to the end of the first semester, Kyle logs onto MSN Messenger and notices that a student has placed him on his buddy list. He is "not sure about this." He goes on to reflect about his decentered classroom:

> When you decenter the classroom and students relate to you because you are either near their age (or look like it, in my case) then you can become a peer of sorts. I don't believe this is necessarily bad, as long as you hold to your pedagogical beliefs. But the communication is interesting: what you communicate by decentering, what and how they communicate in response. Because they've never had a decentered academic discourse, I think they might easily get confused about what is happening. So – I'm concerned. Do I explain – either implicitly or explicitly – how the decentered classroom works and how it is still an academic construct? ….. Seems like I'm losing an awful lot of authority if I don't construct the decentered classroom situation, but can I even do that? It almost sounds like a fallacy, to say that I can. A contradiction in terms.

In these words, Kyle reflects and questions the ways to think about the decentered classroom. His humility allows him to ask these questions. He is so open that as he acknowledges his own limits, and the limits of his pedagogical stance, he learns from his own teaching. By the end of the semester, however, Kyle is able to answer his own questions – "I didn't have to say 'we're doing this because' or 'we're doing this in a different way from other courses because.'" He knew this because his student understood and appreciated the class was different.

Yet, as we practice humility, we realize there are times when the population of the class demands a different kind of control. Kay Halasek leads us to acknowledge

that the open collaboration that we insist upon in the classroom does not necessarily comprise a discourse community. She says, "students whose commonalities do not extend past their membership in a single writing course do not constitute a community of like minded peers" (*Pedagogy of Possibility* 39). In other words, as Halasek writes, "the success of the collaborative class depends on the students" (71). One of the goals of a 21st century critical teaching theory that I outlined in Chapter 1 is to understand the subject positions of others and approach all issues with open hearts and open minds. If we expect this of our students, we must practice it and sometimes we must accept the fact that our students just don't get along. Even if the teacher understands subject positions, there will always be students who will not. Especially in an open-admissions setting, cultural and religious issues can sometimes preclude complete collaboration and no matter how student centered we want our class to be, we cannot allow our students to abuse one another.

Time is a factor that always figures into the life of the 21st century critical teacher. Kyle continues to learn from others as a week of conferences brings a new round of concerns – most related to students, but one concerning his own time schedule: "Conferencing takes an extremely long time. I figure that I spent 10 hours instead of two – and they were only 10 minute meetings." However, Kyle recognizes the importance of conferences. He knows that he can help students one on one. In conferences, he can address individual issues such as grammar and he can also build ethos. He can get to know his students on a personal level and answer questions. He seems more concerned, however about two students:

> One has been sick and has missed 4 of 9 weeks (if you lump the missed days together). I believe she is lying to me and that she isn't actually sick. I have difficulty in helping her – because I believe she is lying, because she hasn't made sufficient effort, and because any attempts I've made to understand her absence has been unsuccessful. I have another student who just took his 7th absence. It is hard to give a student a lower grade for this reason. Their lack of interest and effort affect my perspective and my ability/desire to help them. I don't know if this is bad or normal. Either way, it doesn't feel good.

Rather than just dismiss these students as immature or irresponsible, Kyle worries about them. However, in his optimistic and inexperienced bubble, Kyle fails to consider that this may be a kind of resistance. Unfortunately absence is a kind of resistance that cannot be made productive unless the student decides to curtail the behavior and attend class.

Faith and the Critical Teacher

In Freirean terms, faith is the belief in the power of humans 'to make and remake, to create and recreate' (Qtd in Peterson 29). Kay Halasek reminds us that we must have the faith in students to enact a "student-generated (not simply student centered) pedagogy in which students are given and expected to bear responsibility for the construction of the classroom and its goals" (*Pedagogy of Possibility* 180). Kyle demonstrates faith in his encounter with a female student who lost belief in

herself. Kyle believes in this student, especially as she find the thesis of a difficult article. When he asked her to rephrase the thesis in her own words and she succeeds, "her eyes changed." He says, "her eyes registered knowledge – the knowledge she was seeking from the essay, but ALSO more importantly, her eyes registered knowledge of her own abilities." Kyle considers this success – "the multi-layered process of students constructing knowledge – I mean – I SAW it today." Kyle describes the moment of engagement and we can also see the teaching journal as an important site of reflection, inquiry, and growth that I described earlier in the chapter. If Kyle loses faith in ZPD, he can return to this journal and see and remember how it worked for this student.

Trust

Trust is "the feeling that emerges through dialogue and experiences of congruity between belief and action, what is said and done" (Peterson 29). 21st century critical rhetoric and writing teachers tackle the difficult material and they create trust. Research shows that students will rise to the challenge if given material just above their ZPD. By the end of week two, Kyle is concerned about a difficult article that he is required to teach. He worries about his teaching and about student resistance: "an immediate concern has been the student reaction to the difficult essay. They've resisted it—professing that they are unable to understand it." Yet, he trusts them: " But I know they can. I am concerned about their perceptions …concerning their own abilities. I want to be certain to reinforce their abilities, not their

shortcomings, and this is a very personal strategy. But will it work?" His concern about his teaching of the article almost seems eclipsed by his concern for the students and this shows an unusual kind of trust. He has seen how being a teacher and student at the same time is a balancing act, and this theme will reverberate throughout Kyle's experience. He has already figured out that "Teaching is exhausting. I'm spent at 10:20 every morning after class." And yet, when asked how he views his students he says, "I care about them. This surprised me." Kyle is exhausted because he is what Hillocks calls an environmental teacher: "The environmental mode," writes Hillocks, ". . . places great responsibility on the teacher to develop materials and activities that will engage students in processes requisite to particular writing tasks" (*Teaching*, 56). Its counterpart, the presentational mode, is the easy way out in my opinion. This is banking education as described in Chapter 1. It is easy for the teacher because he/she does not have to worry about student engagement. A non-reflective banking or presentational teacher can give the same lectures every semester over a 20-year career. But, environmental teaching requires serious planning. Hillocks notes this kind of planning is to "invent materials and activities that will engage students in using specific processes and strategies relevant to particular writing tasks" (Teaching 125). This is a time and energy consuming proposition that requires commitment, caring, and engagement with students. Environmental teaching shows trust and it inspires trust.

Kyle expresses concerns about students who are so accustomed to the banking method of education that they just wish to be "stuffed" with knowledge. He knows

his theory, and he knows that he is an environmental teacher – even as he knows that banking and presentational teaching is "easier" for teacher and students alike. Yet, he does the hard work to "create environments to induce and support active learning of complex strategies that students are not capable of using on their own" (Hillocks, *Teaching*, 55). Kyle insists on engagement and this requires time, energy, hard work, and trust on the part of teacher and students.

Hope

Hope is "the expectation that something will come of the encounter" (Peterson 29). Halasek reminds us that only after student writers have been made conscious of linguistic and ideological positionings can they begin to have the power over words that will allow them to write from a more personally well-defined ideological perspective" (34). Kyle creates hope because he sees teaching as an act of learning. As he continually reflects on his experience, he learns as much from his students as they learn from him. In week 3, he says he is "developing a teaching repertoire." While he has worked on Vygotsky's theory of ZPD, he now sees it in action as he states that success is "finding the ZPD." He works to "unveil" students' ZPD, which he believes students keep "veiled." Like Peterson, Kyle "…see[s] students as subjects, as actors and agents who create meaning and construct concepts, not as objects or passive recipients of 'knowledge'" (17). Kyle states that rather than seeing his students as vessels, he sees them as "landscapes." As we see them in this way, writes Peterson, we develop a "new respect for them, one which enables us to

envision the student-teacher relationship as a partnership in learning" (17). Kyle likes to adopt "Hillocks notion of coaching." As he says, "they are playing – I'm supervising." This kind of respect and hope for students is a major attribute of 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teachers.

An anomaly occurred during the early part of Kyle's career: the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Kyle's concerns for this week were varied:

> How do you expect the students to focus on the task at hand when such events are clearly going to distract them? How do you bring the event into the classroom in a constructive way? And—as a beginning teacher conscious of his personal ethics and how those appear to students in the classroom – how can I include important points to the discussion without alienating the students?

As a 21st century critical teacher, he is concerned about the students first, then teaching, then himself. He never considers ignoring the horrific events,[39] for he believes that students must become actively involved in political causes – and because he truly cares for them – their hearts, souls, and minds.

In fact, by the end of week 4, Kyle's journal addresses concerns about the students first, then concerns about himself or his teaching. Critical teachers place

[39] As a side note, I will never forget the morning of 9-11 as I observed an instructor at approximately 11:00 a.m., sitting in the hallway with a student as reports of the attack filtered in. I had let my Technical Writing class go because writing a process analysis somehow didn't seem important when people were suffering. The instructor was calmly "going over" the paper as the young, female, first-year student, obviously distraught and scared, with tears in her eyes, tried to pay attention to him. If the instructor noticed the tears, he ignored them. His uncaring attitude continues to haunt me.

their students first and they really care about those students. A caring teacher is a reflective teacher. This teacher is a problem poser and a coach. A critical 21st century writing and rhetoric teacher combines all of this by offering the opportunity for problem-centered small group discussion (Hillocks, *Teaching*, 66). Week 5 brings the comment, "when asked, I didn't have a SINGLE person say that they had EVER written a rough draft before," then he adds, "Of course, now I have to figure out how to read 50 rough drafts and offer helpful suggestions in about 48 hours time." His personal concerns, however, no longer focus on his in-class presentation but rather time management skills so that he can more efficiently help his students.

Kyle ends his first semester with words of hope. He lists five concerns at the end of week 10, and his only concern about himself focuses on his ability to perform in his own classes: "I have three papers of my own due in November, and have neglected to conduct the kind of work that I normally would've done by now." However, as always, that concern is fifth on the list of five. Before that, his concern is about the new unit and that it "will be useful and that students will learn something in the process." He is concerned "that they will be able to use the process of interview and the other things we will discuss in this unit in future units or in their other classes." His concerns also move into the future, as he has begun designing units for the second semester course, English 1213. He worries "that I am helping them to improve their writing, and not kill their invention and ingenuity." He is truly focused on his students at this point.

By the end of the semester, Kyle writes of his wish to continue decentering the class (and he marvels at how some of his peers are unable to veer from "the plan"). He speaks of preparing for English 1213, both himself and his students. He is concerned "that they leave my class with a good bridge to the next course." His final list of concerns explains how this novice teacher has become a pro in such a short time: "I guess – just writing this down – I realize that not one bit of it matters as long as my students are better for having taken my class. Good day/bad day – pedagogical theory in place – professional or with hat and baggy jeans – none of that really matters I suppose."

It should become obvious that Kyle's story is not common. Many first time TAs have no theory from which to draw. They do not know the difference between a student-centered course and a teacher-centered course because they have never been involved in the former. Yet, many of these first – time teachers can become 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teachers through training, practice, and theory.

Learning from Kyle

While I would like for the categories hope, trust, humility, love, and faith to be nice and neat, in fact, they are not. They overlap one another, and they merge and intersect, as categories tend to do. However, they are crucial categories for a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher because they allow us to think in new ways about teaching.

As Kyle continued to learn and evolve, his teaching journals became increasingly personal. He wrote extensively about addressing certain resistances and individual students. By Fall 2003, his last semester of teaching, his journals are less philosophical and seem more mechanical. Perhaps the time crunch involved in teaching and finishing his degree was just too much for him. It seems that he has interiorized the theory to a point that he no longer feels the need to write about it. One common thread seems to be that Kyle wants more engagement with and among students, and to him that means he should talk less so students will talk more.

Yet, how does this fictitious character inform a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teaching practice? I would say that just as Hillocks learned from Mr. Gow and Professor Wade, we can learn from Kyle. While Hillocks presents his teachers as positive and contrastive examples, I present Kyle as an example of a Hillocks-inspired, feminist, Freirean, Vygotskian teacher – a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher. After 5 – 10 years of teaching experience, Kyle may lose some of his idealism but I suspect that he will conduct a student-centered class session with the ease of an Ira Shor.

We can learn much from analyzing Kyle's first two years of teaching. Aptitude, attitude, dedication, perseverance, and caring are all character traits of successful first year writing teachers. While Kyle possessed all these attributes, he also possessed the theory and the mentorship that validated his decisions and his performance in the classroom. He could feel secure in knowing that his mentor was always available and eager to discuss teaching. He had a year of writing and rhetoric

theory classes before he began teaching, and not only did he take those classes, he truly understood and interiorized the theories as they applied to the classroom. With a background of feminist, cultural, and critical theories, Kyle created a student centered classroom in which all students felt valued and important and thus he became a 21st century critical rhetoric and writing teacher.

Chapter 4
Theorizing Technology for the 21st Century Critical Writing and Rhetoric Class

A crucial aspect of the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class is the use, theory, and understanding of technologies, even if the course is taught in a traditional classroom. If, as I stated in Chapter 1, students should attain an activist and critical consciousness including critically interpreting and reading the rhetoric of web pages, television, and e-mail, then it is imperative that the latest technologies be available for writing and rhetoric teachers who wish to use them. This means more than just computers in the classroom.[40] Welch suggests "deploying the freshman writing course partly as a study and performance of technology and communication forms" (*Electric Rhetoric* 139). This would mean that communication and collaboration must take place on those computers, and students should be led to theorize what it means to use technology. They should explore MySpace[41] and

[40] I do realize that not all classrooms are digital; and in fact, computers in all classrooms would not be desirable. Yet, when computers are available, it is best to utilize them for more than just their word processing function.

[41] MySpace is one of many sites where our students make friends and communicate. They create their own page, often complete with pictures and descriptions of their likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc. Each page offers its own blog and students can comment on each other's blogs.

understand why they are so drawn to Instant Messenger.[42] They must discuss flaming and rudeness and loss of a sense of audience in online communication. They must discuss gender and race issues that arise in online communication. They must discuss the digital divide. However, other technologies are as important as computers.[43] The television is ubiquitous, and as Welch tells us, "Our students, living their lives in the hegemony of the television screen and speaker and the computer screen and speaker, are now literate in ways never imagined two generations ago" (*Electric Rhetoric* 4). In addition, film is pervasive and our students spend much of their free time watching films on the small and large screen. Through study and theory, our students must attain a screen literacy that assists in their critical citizenship.

Indeed, we must be vigilant if we are to keep up with the ever-emerging technologies involving MP3 players, cell phones, digital cameras, camera phones, Blackberries, and so on. As students study propaganda and rhetoric, much of it occurs in the Blogosphere, on the World Wide Web, and the television screen, and we must theorize what this means for our culture and for our lives. As Welch notes, "These oral/aural structures possess inevitable connections to writing that must be better understood, taught, and deployed by the citizens of the larger public" (*Electric Rhetoric* 7). Even with the ever-present digital divide, most of our 21st century

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[42] Especially in an open admissions environment, we are likely to encounter students who due to the digital divide, do not own a computer and do not utilize MySpace or Instant Messenger. This economic and social position points to the great need for theorizing technology, especially if there are computers in the classroom.

[43] We must not forget that even the simple pencil is a technology.

students come into the classroom fully computer literate, and we must lead them to analyze the influence of technology in their lives. Technology changes everything – it is definitely not transparent, as many students believe, and the screen must be a major part of a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher's pedagogy.

This chapter explores technology and its use in the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class. From computers to television to film, technology matters and it is imperative that we teach a critical visual literacy.

Theorizing Technology

From the alphabet to the Gutenberg Press to the telegraph, technology has affected writing in a major way. But no technology has advanced as quickly as computer technology and no field has embraced technology quite as completely as writing and rhetoric scholars have embraced the computer. While a few, such as Marshall McLuhan theorized technology as early as the 1960's, writing and rhetoric specialists began to theorize computers in and out of the classroom in the 1980's. Some are pessimistic, but most are optimistic as they seek to theorize the effects of computers in the classroom and the ways that we can advance the field and teach writing more effectively. Therefore, this section summarizes what has been written, examines its effects, and theorizes how technologies can effectively influence a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class.

The literature surrounding computers and composition can be divided into four categories. The first would be theoretical works such as McLuhan's *The*

Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man, Turkle's *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet,* and Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* that can inform technology studies as they relate to the culture. The second category of texts focuses on computer technology and its effects on the humanities and/or writing in general. Texts with a general humanities focus such as Sven Birkerts The *Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age,* and Richard Lanham's *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*, can be applied to writing and rhetoric studies in a broad manner as they reach back to McLuhan and Ong and provide a transition from the early theories to the later theories. The third category would include texts such as Christina Haas's *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy* , Jay David Bolter's W*riting Space Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, and Kathleen Welch's *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy,* that focus on computers and technologies and their effect on writing. The final category includes articles from *Computers and Composition, Kairos,* and collections of essays that are practical in focus and can apply directly to the classroom. I use all categories in this section as I theorize why a 21st century writing and rhetoric teacher should pay attention to computers in the classroom and what they should do to keep up with an ever changing digital classroom.

Technology and Culture

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Marshall McLuhan offers a broad theory that gives writing and rhetoric scholars much to think about. McLuhan notes:

> If a new technology is introduced either from within or from without a culture and if it gives new stress or ascendancy to one or another of our senses the ratio among all of our senses is altered. We no longer feel the same, nor do our eyes and ears and other senses remain the same. (24)

If McLuhan is correct, and new technologies contribute to altered sense ratios, then the implications for a pervasive technology, such as the computer in the classroom, are immense[44]. In addition, many of us have experienced what McLuhan deems "the first onset of a new technology" (23), and thus, we, as teachers "respond most emphatically because the new sense ratios set up at once by the technological dilation of eye or ear present men [and women] with a surprising new world, which evokes a vigorous new 'closure,' or novel pattern of interplay, among all the senses together" (23). Our students, however, are located in the "prolonged phase of 'adjustment' of all personal and social life to the new model of perception set up by the new technology" (23). McLuhan says this is the "real revolution" (23) and there is a

[44] McLuhan does not present this as a benign condition. He writes "The interiorization of the technology of the phonetic alphabet translates man from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual world" (18). This use of "magical" vs. "neutral" makes it seem as if an oral culture is much more lively and interesting. The use of "neutral" to describe the visual world provides a connotation of a dull, lifeless, world of reading. I would contend that, in the world of computers, movies, television, and multimedia, just the opposite is true.

definite generation gap when it comes to computer technology. We must take this generation gap into account as we theorize and deploy technologies in the classroom.

Twenty years later, in 1982, Walter Ong called McLuhan "deeply perceptive" (29), and stated that "few people have had so stimulating an effect as Marshall McLuhan on so many diverse minds, including those who disagreed with him or believed they did" (29), as he continued the theoretical practice and the culture surged ahead in its acceptance of computer technology. Ong is very optimistic about the advent of new technologies, as he writes, "Despite what is sometimes said, electronic devices are not eliminating books but are actually producing more of them" (135). Ong says that already intensified print is "further intensified by the computer" (136). Although Ong focuses on the shift from orality to literacy and to secondary orality, his point about changes in consciousness should be well taken. As a culture changes from oral to literate, its citizens become increasingly more visual. Therefore, it should follow that a visual/linear culture, when immersed in computer/windows technology would intensify its privileging of the visual computer and lessen its allegiance to the linear book. And, of course, those who are caught on the "wrong" side of the digital divide will become even more isolated from mainstream culture, especially academic culture.

In 1994, Sven Birkerts bemoans the end of reading and writing – the demise of the book. Birkerts writes, "A change is upon us – nothing could be clearer" (118). Birkets believes that we are (or were) in a state of transition, which requires "reweaving the social and cultural web" (123). Birkerts warns us to watch for the

following in an "all electronic future:" (128). 1) "Language erosion" (128), where "complex discourse patterns" (128) are replaced by "simple linguistic prefab" (128)[45]. We should watch for the "flattening of historical perspectives" (129), or an altered perception of history due to "changes in information storage and access" (129). Finally, Birkerts says, we should watch for "the waning of the private self" (130). As the world comes into our homes through the machine, doors and walls won't matter and neither will time. We are never solitary for we are always connected through wires.[46]

While Birkerts mourns the demise of the book, Richard Lanham depicts a technological utopia. He is quite optimistic about technology and he imagines a future with electronic books and "an incredible personalization of learning, a radical democratization of 'textbooks' that allows every student to walk an individual path" (10). He foresees a "new rhetoric of the arts" (14) in which there are "no invidious distinctions between high and low culture, commercial and pure usage, talented or chance creation. . ." (14). Lanham envisions an electronic word that can be manipulated by all users and he says "Electronic technology is full of promising avenues for language instruction; it will be lunacy if we do not construct a sophisticated comparative-literature pedagogy upon it" (23). He believes that computer technology could save the humanities. Furthermore, Lanham points out

[45] It is easy to see that this prediction has come true in 2006 when we notice the many acronyms that permeate our culture.
[46] It is also notable that many of our students write their papers while chatting on AIM. They are never alone.

that humans will have to renegotiate "the alphabet/icon ratio[47] upon which print based thought is built" (34). He further notes, "For surely the greatest change…has been the coming of the electronic word, the movement from letters printed on paper to digitized images projected onto the phosphorous screen of a computer" (73).

These early theorists all seem to agree on one major point – computer technology is changing consciousness. Whether it is altered sense ratios, altered alphabet/icon ratios or perhaps more complex, human consciousness is becoming more attuned to the pervasive existence of the computer. As each generation of students arrives in our classrooms, they are more likely to have grown up with a computer mouse in their hands. Indeed, the computer has changed writing instruction in a major way.

Computers and the Writing and Rhetoric Class

Christina Haas explores the ways in which technology and writing not only "cannot be separate" (x), but also that they are "inextricably linked" (xii). She writes that "a computer is best understood – as is any technology – as a complex of objects, actions, people, motives, and uses" (xii). Haas argues against the notion of technological transparency and she asks, "What is the nature of computer technologies, and what is their impact on writing?" (3). This is a question that we must closely consider for our writing and rhetoric classes as we relate to students.

[47] I would be remiss if I did not mention the early work of C.S. Peirce, whose early writings led the way in this field. Also see Killingsworth and Gilbertson, Ch 2 & 3 for an explication of Peirce's theory for Technical Communication.

Haas says that "Vygotskian theory and neo-Vygotskian approaches like that of Scribner and Cole provide the potentially most useful basis for exploring the Technology Question" (13). She explores the myths that she says impede technology studies. These myths make two assertions "that technology is transparent" and that "technology is all-powerful" (33). She further states that, "For Technology Studies to be a viable and useful scholarly enterprise, the myths of transparent and all powerful technology must be overcome" (35).

She further states that "it is not an exaggeration to say that technology is the central fact of 20th century literacy" (205) and she focuses on technological determinism as she makes it clear that she is not a technological determinist. She states clearly, "But of course, technologies do not rise independently" (215). Human agency is important in the development of technologies, according to Haas, and she writes, ". . . different writing technologies set up radically different spatial, tactile, visual, and even temporal relations between the writer's material body and his or her material text" (226). Understanding this complicated issue helps us to understand the many different writing processes that our students employ in regard to technology. Some must use the pen and paper to complete initial drafts. For some reason, it helps them to be able to touch the paper, to handle the pen and to form the letters on the page. These students can then type the words. Others can compose directly on the computer screen, with some who are able to revise on screen and others who must print and write revisions on the printed page.

Jay David Bolter refers to our current times as "the late age of print" (4) and our students will often be more attuned to that notion than we are. Bolter notes:

> On the World Wide Web, the images often dominate. In presenting animation and digitized video, a Web page can supplement or bypass prose altogether. In this respect, hypermedia is participating in a process of remediation that has been going on for more than a century: the response of prose to the visual technologies of photography, cinema, and television (47).

He says that "…the relationship between word and image is becoming increasingly unstable, and this instability is especially apparent in popular American magazines, newspapers, and various forms of graphic advertisements" (49). This unstable relationship becomes even more crucial to our classrooms as we must be vigilant if we wish to keep students in computer mediated classes away from MySpace during class time. Part blog, part Instant Messenger, this form of communication is highly visual. Students place their pictures on these sites and it can be quite disturbing to surprise a young male student who is perusing pictures of female students and members of MySpace during class.[48] MySpace is invading our classrooms whether we like it or not and the visual nature of the website seems to be irresistible for many students. We can either fight it or we can use it to enhance our classrooms and I believe that it is our responsibility to be aware of it and to use it in our classrooms.

[48] Unfortunately, I have surprised many students, many times.

We should seriously think about designing writing assignments that utilize MySpace. If we are to be student centered, MySpace is a must.

In *Persuasion and Privacy in Cyberspace*, Laura Gurak addresses the issue of the electronic community. She reminds us that "In ancient Greece, where Western rhetorical theory was first codified, debate often took place in the common gathering place of the polis where citizens engaged in public debate and exchanged ideas" (7). MySpace is one polis of the current generation of college students.

Indeed, when we place computers in the classroom, everything changes, and a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher not only knows this, but she uses the technology in a manner that furthers the critical classroom experiences. While computers in the classroom can be a tremendous distraction for students, if used in a thoughtful and theoretical manner, from website evaluation to discussion board postings and online chats, the computer can also enhance critical thinking and critical learning in the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class.

Teacher Training for the Wired Classroom

A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher will know the theory I have summarized, and he or she will keep up with the latest developments through continued training and professional development. Now that we have explored **why** it is important for teachers to theorize technology and to use it in a critical manner, let us explore **what** we can do to stay current.

In a recent issue of *Kairos*, Anthony T. Atkins writes that new writing teachers are often ". . . thrust into the technology rich classroom without specific training with technologies" (Atkins). As I noted previously, technology can make a huge difference in the writing and rhetoric class, but a teacher must be trained in theory and in practice. As Atkins notes, "Only a few gifted individuals can walk into a classroom without prior training and teach writing effectively. Fewer still can walk into a technology rich classroom and teach effectively without appropriate preparation" (Atkins). Indeed, we must continually keep up with "our students' changing literacies, and the ways in which we must respond to these literacies so that we continue to teach writing well" (Atkins). We cannot simply teach writing, we must teach it well.

Atkins emphasizes the changing nature of digital technology and computer literacies, as he writes, "TA training with technology will serve no long-term purpose unless we also consider the shifts in literacies evoked by the growing role of these technologies in students' lives" (Atkins). This means that teachers cannot just attend one workshop if they are to keep current. They must attend workshops and/or training sessions annually. Those workshops should be conducted by cutting edge technology staff working with writing and rhetoric faculty.

Atkins discusses the importance of visual literacy and its merger with the verbal:

> Reading and writing now encompasses the visual and verbal as well as the written. Digital technologies allow us to send messages with

> words, pictures, and video attached. Digital technologies allow us to talk on the phone and send real-time snapshots of our immediate environment. We communicate using a variety of methods and strategies: pictures, voices, video, and text. Students, teachers, coaches, ministers, employers, teens, and children can use digital technology to compose messages that incorporate the visual, oral, and written components of communication. (Atkins)

Teachers cannot ignore the merger of the visual, oral, and written. As language theorists, we must research, think, write, and discern what this means for our culture and thus for our students. We must come up with ways to work the merger into the classroom situation so that students can become critical cybercitizens who understand technology, what it does and what it means. This will be vitally important for students who are on both sides of the digital divide – those who have been fortunate enough to grow up with computers and those who have been denied access due to poverty, ignorance, or both.

With all of this in mind, Atkins conducted a survey in which he tried to find out what kinds of technology training programs were available and how they were being used for teachers of first year writing and rhetoric. The survey concluded that:

> . . . while programs in rhetoric and composition are not necessarily requiring courses or workshops for technology training and teaching new literacies, many programs are indeed, attempting to <u>offer</u> courses and workshops for technology training and teaching with new

> literacies. The nature of the training occurring in such courses and workshops centers on the use of software programs (like Netscape composer, Microsoft office products, Macromedia products, and/or Adobe products) and on the use of hardware located in the computer classroom. For example, a workshop might train graduate students to use a LCD projector or a classroom printer. (Atkins)

Unfortunately, it appears that the theory behind teaching writing with technology has been ignored in favor of more hands-on instruction in the use of software. Furthermore,

> Some programs have put the cart before the horse in that departments and programs have managed to gain the resources to create fully technological classrooms, but have somehow forgotten that someone must be employed to maintain the technology, to train new teachers to use it, and just as important, to teach experienced teachers how to use it. (Atkins)

Lack of training not only harms teacher ethos, it also limits critical thinking that could take place. Many well-qualified but under-prepared teachers create beautiful Power Point Presentations and then read from them in class. Power Point lends itself to the current-traditional paradigm, which I will discuss in Chapter 5. Colorful yet mind-numbing Power Point presentations are no more effective than reading to students from a textbook.

Teacher training, however, does not only apply to the technology rich classroom. Increasingly, online writing instruction is becoming a common way of teaching first-year writing. Yet, even a well-trained writing instructor cannot just take his or her lesson plans to an online environment. As Beth Hewett and Christa Ehmann Powers write, "Indeed, online instructors who teach without such guidance often have experiences like those of [a] novice dart player." Indeed, online environments work better when teachers have guidance and support and while teachers can easily place handouts and assignments online, it is much more difficult to provide a collaborative environment for students. Teachers can use software such as Blackboard to place students into collaborative groups for peer critique and for discussion, but the use of such software must be planned meticulously and theorized carefully.[49]

In addition, Hewett and Powers write,

> As novice online instructors -- students or trainees -- educators certainly benefit both cognitively and affectively from clearly stated goals, supportive measures, and various training strategies. With them, online instructors can flourish. Without them, however, online instructors may find themselves in uncertain circumstances, frustrated

[49] For example, I taught on online section that utilized Blackboard's collaborative sections. It involved hours of placing students in a group discussion forum according to their writing needs and the interests they expressed. I posed questions for the small groups and had them critique and discuss each other's writings. Although time consuming, this collaborative online classroom seemed more effective than one in which students only communicate with the teacher.

> by a lack of understanding surrounding their own online instructional processes and products. (Hewett and Powers)

Indeed, online instructors must be prepared for large amounts of e-mail and for students who just don't read instructions. They must design documents that are highly readable, and one important area of training must be in document design.

Hewett and Powers offer many tactics and ideas that are also effective for traditional teaching situations, but the tactics are revised for online environments. For example, they suggest that all training be conducted online, and that student-teacher relationships be simulated with the trainee acting as a student. In addition, the teacher training must be flexible, much as the instruction for students must be flexible for individual learning styles. Finally, reflection is imperative. There must be clearly stated goals and clearly discerned assessment procedures. In addition, there should be additional opportunities for professional development so that individuals can use their talents and skills to their best advantage.[50]

Let us now move into a theory of film, video, and computer that can encourage a very high level of critical thinking for the 21st century writing and rhetoric class. Film is an important technology for the classroom, and the next section focuses on ways to combine film with computer and video technology for the classroom. If film is to be used in the classroom, it must be done in a theoretically sound way for the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class.

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[50] For more detail on this training program, see Hewett and Powers's web text. Since I believe that online instruction is the least effective form of writing and rhetoric instruction, I will spend little time on it here.

Merging Film, Video, and Computer

In our current age of post-process theory and computer-mediated composition, virtually everyone uses film and/or video in the composition classroom. Some use television commercials to teach argument and rhetoric while others use music videos to attract students' attention and to connect with them culturally. Still others use full-length movies or clips, to provide subject matter for critical analysis. Thus, while computers are important to composition studies, we must not marginalize other technologies such as film and video. In fact, we can incorporate film into a computer-assisted classroom with ease, as the technologies complement one another in a unique manner. Most popular films offer a website and a music video to broaden the audience and complement the film Therefore, we can merge the technologies and use them to teach visual literacy, critical thinking, and, of course, effective writing.

Popular Film in the Writing and Rhetoric Class

Since most of our students do not remember a time without computers, video, and MTV, we can use popular film to connect with their experiences. Our students' lives are hopelessly merged with screens, as they spend their days clicking on computer Windows, viewing television screens, and viewing popular movies. Technology has changed us, and our everyday fragmentation is but a symptom of the ways in which technology influences everything surrounding our students' daily existence.

Therefore, we must adjust to a world that is no longer a strict narrative of which we can easily make sense. Ours is a fragmented culture of simulation, representation, and constant sensory bombardment. Jim Collins calls this "The Bombardment of Signs." He notes,

> One of the key preconditions of the postmodern condition is the proliferation of signs and their endless circulation, generated by the technological developments associated with the information explosion (cable television, VCRs, digital recording, computers, etc). These technologies have produced an ever increasing surplus of texts. (759)

Since most of our students have grown up in this culture, they require sensory bombardment in order to be stimulated, and we can help them make sense of their culture through film. Current popular films often make use of computer-generated reality, and this sense of representation must be explored critically if we are to understand our world. In the 21st century, these new understandings must extend into the writing and rhetoric classroom.

Background

Although film and composition theory can be elusive, a few scholars have addressed the ways in which film can be effective in the writing and rhetoric class. In *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures: Refiguring College English Studies,* James Berlin argues that students should be prepared to "offer a critical response to daily experience" (54), and he believes that the English class plays a huge role in

"consciousness formation" (56). In short, Berlin believes that students "ought to write as well as read poetry and fiction, create as well as interpret magazine ads, produce as well as critique television situation comedies and newscasts" (112). And, of course, they must be able to read film as a text, and to assess its rhetorical value or lack thereof. They must acquire a critical visual literacy that extends into their everyday existence. Berlin uses film and asks students to locate binary oppositions, consider gender, class, and cultural codes, locate points of conflict and dissonance in those codes, and understand that omissions or silences are as important as sounds. Students can also be led to analyze the mise en scene, camera work, and editing in order to determine exactly what the director's purpose is, and what he/she wants to say to the spectator. These consumptive acts can be made even more effective when mixed with productive and performative acts.

Henry Giroux offers another view, as he writes that film, "offers up subject positions, mobilizes desires, influences us unconsciously, and helps to construct the landscape of American culture" (585). Yet, our own students are unlikely to notice how the everyday activity of film viewing has shaped their consciousness, until we point out just how influential a film text might be. In his own classes, Giroux has used film "as a resource to offset dominant textbook ideologies and . . . to challenge officially sanctioned knowledge and modes of learning" (585). He believes that "popular film might be used pedagogically to prepare students to function as critical agents capable of understanding, engaging, and transforming" (586). He writes that "film connects to students' experiences in multiple ways that oscillate between the

lure of film as entertainment and the provocation of film as cultural practice" (589). Film, for Giroux, is "a new pedagogical text, one that does not simply reflect culture but actually constructs it" (589). Giroux does not focus on film theory in his classes, but he is "more concerned with what it means to situate film within a broader cultural context as well as with the political and pedagogical implications of film as a teaching machine" (592). Giroux wishes to "connect film as a cultural practice to broader public issues, social relations, and institutional formations" (593). A 21st century critical writing and rhetoric practice could combine Berlin and Giroux and merge the web and videotexts, for if students can recognize how they are constructed by their own viewing habits, they can become a part of Berlin's critical citizenry, and thus acquire a critical visual literacy.

Similarly, Kathleen Welch offers a valuable theory of screens in *Electric Rhetoric.* We must attend to screens, large and small, because our students will be viewing many films as video, on the small screen in their home. Welch writes, ". . . the oralism of video contributes to their [our students] literacy as consciousness" (109). As we know, our students come into the classroom having been immersed in the rhetoric of screens and this visual/aural/oral element of their literacy has shaped their consciousness. As Welch notes, ". . . the new primacy of graphic communication as it entwines with the alphabetic word have intersubjectively reorganized how we think, not just what we think" (200). Welch suggests "deploying the freshman writing course partly as a study and performance of technology and communication forms" (139). This may include all visual forms: television,

computers, and of course, film. The overlap of video, computers, and film should be investigated since films are often promoted through music video and web pages. Welch reminds us that we must embrace our students culture, for they were born into this video world and "for intellectuals to disdain these proliferated chopped up, repetitive, formulaic videotexts as untouchable means we have lost contact with our students and our public" (109). Welch further believes that we cannot dismiss popular forms and "rather than denigrating such texts for being overblown, repetitive, redundant and excessive" (110), we must make use of popular forms, even if they are not scholarly, or even critically acclaimed works.

Berlin, Welch, and Giroux all offer productive arguments concerning the use of film as a teaching tool. I would take these valuable theories one step further and merge the film, the music video, and the web site, for this is the way that film is marketed to our students. In light of their arguments, I would use a popular film such as *Moulin Rouge*[51] to connect to students fragmented and overloaded existence, and also to lead students to a critique of that existence. *Moulin Rouge,* Baz Luhrman's story of the historical Parisian dance hall, is a masterpiece of simulation that defies temporal and narrative conventions. Part musical, part drama, part comedy, as a contemporary film that students will have already seen, *Moulin Rouge* offers students an example to critique and a way to analyze themselves as audience/spectator.

[51] Teachers should use films that they love. Many other films would work in this situation. I currently use *Moulin Rouge*, but I have used *Goodfellas* and *Being John Malcovich* with success.

Film in the Writing and Rhetoric Class

In *Life On The Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet,* Sherry Turkle examines the self, as she writes of the "eroding boundaries between the real and the virtual, the animate and the inanimate, and unitary and the multiple self, which is occurring both in advanced scientific fields of research and the patterns of everyday life" (10). Indeed, *Moulin Rouge* erodes the boundaries as it blurs the borders between the real, the surreal, and the computer generated virtual self.

In our 21st century critical writing and rhetoric classes, students can analyze the ways in which *Moulin Rouge* reflects and constructs their own MTV-driven existence through the opening scene of the film. The opening shot fades into a stage with a conductor facing the camera as the spectator hears an orchestra tuning up. As the curtain opens, the usual "20th Century Fox" logo appears , but we are also bombarded with images such as the conductor in front of the screen, wildly waving his arms. The curtain closes and opens again to show the movie credits. As the title of the film becomes visible, shadows appear across the screen that is located within the stage within our screen. The computer-generated shadow of a cancan dancer kicks her way across the screen, as her audience (the computer-generated shadows of men's top hats) watches. This opening scene should clue the spectator to the fact that this film will be reflective of our fragmented 21st century existence. As we, the spectator, watch our screen, we view the layers of performance: the "live" show onstage with the conductor and orchestra, the digitally enhanced screen that he stands before, and the digital shadows that reflect the "show" going on behind the screen.

For some, these layers produce a disconcerting sense that too much is happening at once. For others, the scene is reflective of everyday life.

The sound in this scene also reflects a fragmented existence, as it moves the spectator from the orchestra tuning, to applause, to the "20th century Fox theme," to "The Sound of Music," to the "Can-Can;" all in fast sound cuts, and all in a matter of a few seconds. As the music suddenly stops, "Paris 1900" appears on the screen. The spectator has been taken from the year 2002 to Paris 1900, in a scene that lasts only 60 seconds.

Director Baz Luhrman uses montage in a manner where the quick cuts can make the spectator feel overloaded. As Graeme Turner writes, "A sudden cut produces surprised, horror, and disruption. . . (71), and *Moulin Rouge* is disruptive. It throws off our idea of narrative, of history, and of linearity. Yet, our MTV-saturated students are accustomed to this type of editing, as it is common in the music videos that they so voraciously consume.

The MTV influenced camera is never static in *Moulin Rouge*. It is always moving or cutting to another shot. From the moment the unconscious Argentinean falls through Christian's roof, the cuts from the reaction of Christian to the typewriter (as the story is being written a year later) to the action. The cuts from the bohemians upstairs, peering through the hole in the ceiling/floor, to the unconscious Argentinean to Toulouse, are dizzying. Just as the cuts become almost unbearable, Christian bursts into song and the camera is static (although strangely angled) for a few seconds. Yet the song that bursts forth is "The Sound of Music," as the spectator

would probably know, was written by Rogers and Hammerstein in the 1960s for the movie of the same name. Time has been disrupted: a song that didn't exist in 1900 is shown as being written in 1900. This happens continually in *Moulin Rouge.* Time is not static, as the music of the 1990's is used in a film that is set in 1900.

Sherry Turkle further writes, ". . . today's models often embrace a postmodern aesthetic of complexity and decentering" (20). The scene where the spectator is introduced to the Moulin Rouge is complex and decentered. The camera literally spins into the dance hall as the spectator is greeted with a surreal and slow motion montage of cuts from the heavily made up female dancers to the introduction of the cartoonesque Harold Ziegler, who is dressed as a circus ringmaster and cracking a whip. The spectator is teased by the opening of the already popular song, "Lady Marmalade." The orange/red lighting suggests debauchery as the camera cuts from the dancers raised skirts to their open mouthed and slightly evil smiles, to Christian's wide-eyed wonder. In this gender bending scene, women in can-can skirts dance to the left, singing "Lady Marmalade," men in top hats and tails dance to the right, singing "Smells Like Teen Spirit," and men in top hats, tails, and skirts dance to the center. Tattooed men dance together, and women dance together. Other songs, such as Fatboy Slim's version of "Because We Can- Can," are intermingled into this scene until it is impossible to distinguish where one stops and another begins. As if this is not enough, after a brief pause, the music and dancing speeds up and our senses are further bombarded in seemingly fast motion as we view feet in the air, women kneeling in front of men, and an air of total abandonment.

As students analyze the scene, they must be made aware of the many techniques that are being employed. Most of the dancing is easy passage (left to right) until the scene intensifies and the dancers go after the customers. At this time, the dancers move from right to left. What does this mean for the dancers/prostitutes? It must mean they will not have an easy time, as one would expect. Perhaps it is foreshadowing the demise of Satine, the star of the Moulin Rouge. Students also must be led to examine the queer aesthetic in this scene, since it articulates "the complex range of queerness that has been in popular culture texts and their audiences all along" (Doty 345). This is a "moment of erotic complexity" (Doty 333). For an instant, the male dancers in the scene are feminized as they imitate a female stripper's pelvic thrust. For another instant, a man with slick black hair, moustache, and a black muscle shirt (a stereotypical homosexual image) appears on the screen. For yet another instant, two large muscled men, covered in tattoos dance slowly, and in another, two of the Diamond Dogs[52] are caught in an embrace. While portions of the scene reach into the realm of circus performers, the gay aesthetic is very much present.

Most importantly, students must be made aware of the fact that they are the audience for this scene, and they must analyze why a filmmaker would aim for a young audience. They should realize that they are the consumers of popular film because they buy the tickets. The music video, "Lady Marmalade," performed by Christina Aguilera, Pink, Lil Kim, Maya, and Missy Elliott, was released prior to the

[52] This is the name given to the can-can dancers at the Moulin Rouge.

release of the movie in hopes that its popularity would draw a crowd to the movie. The marketing plan worked very well and our students willingly participated. They bought tickets to *Moulin Rouge* in droves, and it earned $14,192,000 in its first weekend (Counting Down). Most of us understand that profits are very much a part of Hollywood, and techniques to draw the MTV crowd are quite common, as Turner writes, "The cultural background audiences bring to films . . . is crucial to their idea of what they see and hear. That cultural background specifies a range of musical, as well as cinematic, events. In these days of Dolby stereo and music-packed sound-tracks, music plays an important function in pulling the major segment of the audience, teenagers, into the first place" (67). Filmmakers want our students to spend money viewing their films. Our job is to help our students analyze why they are drawn to see these films so that they will be able to discern the allure.

Feminist Considerations

Although it depends on one's feminist stance, I am certain that some feminists would be displeased with *Moulin Rouge*, for it does objectify women, especially Nicole Kidman, and these issues must be addressed in class. A layer of the film offers the scopophiliac a pleasure in looking, with Nicole Kidman at the center of the pleasure. Laura Mulvey reminds us, "The conventions of mainstream film focus attention on the human form" (486). In Mulvey's world, where the male gaze "projects its fantasy onto the female figure" (487), a female is always a passive exhibitionist. She is "simultaneously looked at and displayed" (487), and indeed,

Mulvey's thesis can be applied to Kidman's performance in *Moulin Rouge*. As we return to the scene that introduces the Moulin Rouge (and Kidman), we can see that the film tends to be very self-conscious about Kidman's "to-be-looked-at-ness" as every eye in the Moulin Rouge is purposely focused on her. Her display functions on Mulvey's two levels: "as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tensions between the looks on either side of the screen" (488). Mulvey's three looks are important here, and should be broken down for students. The camera records the event – it flies with Kidman and makes her look her best, for the purpose of the scene is to show Kidman/Satine as the Sparkling Diamond who outshines the other dancers – the Diamond Dogs. Mulvey's second look encapsulates the audience as they view the final product. This scene will capture an exhausted audience who have just viewed the opening musical number. Kidman/Satine offers the audience a rest from the constant cuts and musical montage as she sings, "Diamonds are a Girls Best Friend" while gliding over the crowd on a trapeze. Extreme close-ups show a perfect beauty, as Kidman emulates many in this scene, from Dietrich to Monroe, to Madonna. Mulvey would call this the "spell of illusion" (493) as the audience fetishizes Kidman. Many would argue that she is a complex sexual object for the viewing pleasure of the male spectator. However, I would add the homoerotic layer that always exists in this film – Kidman is meant to be viewed by women as well as men. This is made obvious by the third look, that of "the characters looking at each other within the screen illusion" (493). The eyes of hundreds of men rest upon

Satine in the scene, yet the female dancers seem to fetishize her also. In a homoerotic moment, one of the Diamond Dogs simulates a kiss in Satine's direction.

When juxtaposed with the male lead in the film, especially in this scene, the male gaze is quite important. In a moment of mistaken identity, Christian is pointed out to Satine, and she must squint her eyes in order to focus upon him. She cannot actively look at him, for she is the object of the gaze in the room, and in his top hat and tails, he looks just like everyone else. In fact, Ewan McGregor/Christian is never sexualized, but he is portrayed as an innocent bohemian writer who is looking for truth, beauty, freedom, and love.

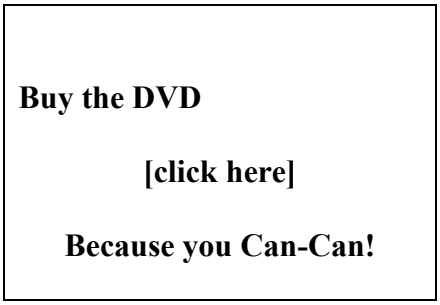
In order to firmly argue for the nature of the gaze in this film, students could be led to examine the effect of the quick cuts that are pervasive until Satine appears. Once she appears, the fast cuts slow down and the camera focuses on her alone. The spectator can get a glimpse of Satine and she is the center of the scene. Satine has incredible power in the scène, as she begins singing Madonna's "Material Girl", her confidence and sexuality empowers her. She is the star. Many watch the movie to see Nicole Kidman. She is a commodity, with her defunct marriage to mega-star Tom Cruise, and her physical beauty, Kidman draws a crowd. Like it or not, our students idolize those such as Kidman and she has great influence on them. Yet is she a powerful woman who goes after what she wants or is she only a reproduced body, for male consumption? This question could generate a productive discussion when posed to students.

Merging Screens: The Website and the Film

Part of the sensory bombardment of our culture occurs with the website. In "Text and Intertext," Robert Stam notes how "contemporary genre theory needs to take audio-visual and computer technologies into account . . ." (155). He writes of the parallel digital texts that create an intertextuality as "electronic culture allows diverse cultural formats – oral, written, and visual – to coexist interactively" (155). Indeed, most popular films have websites and *Moulin Rouge* is no exception.[53] The website can be an integral part of a film's marketing and must be analyzed along with the movie posters, video cover, and other advertisements. The fragmented text adds greatly to the entire text of the film.

The website, clubmoulinrouge.com, bombards the spectator as does the movie. Two windows open as the website tries to persuade viewers to register for a free trip to Hollywood. Then, the viewer is encouraged to buy the DVD version of the movie. Viewers are given the choice of entering the animated "Flash" version of the site or the more static HTML version. Each page features a montage of images: A can-can dancer kicking, a circus performer flying across the screen, a contortionist walking on his hands, and a flashing sign that says:

[53] It must be noted that a current popular film will probably have a website and *Moulin Rouge* still has a website up in 2006. However, *Goodfellas,* being produced in 1990, does not have a website and neither does *Being John Malcovich.* However, a Google search indicates that there are many websites devoted to each film, including one that plays a trailer. These various websites could be used for many purposes including movie reviews from the original theater release.



One can view the film's trailer, read about Paris of the 1890's, download a Moulin Rouge Screen Saver or link to the real Moulin Rouge Website in English or French. However, every single window offers the opportunity to buy the DVD. While the website offers an intertextual experience for the spectator that extends the experience of the film, its major aim seems to be to get the spectator to buy the DVD.

Merging the Small Screen: The Music Video

The music video and soundtrack were released May 8, 2001, and the movie opened June 1, 2001. While many music videos have little to do with the film, "Lady Marmalade" could be seen as a direct marketing ploy that features the beautiful and famous singers dressed as can-can dancers/courtesans. Updated for 2001 and complete with a rap verse, if the song doesn't attract an audience, the costumes, sets, dancing, and overt sexuality will. The video was a regular feature on MTV's Total Request Live, in which viewers call and e-mail the show in order to vote for their favorite video. The song was a mainstay on Top 20 radio stations. This is all a part of the film and the creation of an audience for the film, and students must analyze the video in order to discern its appeal.

A Critical Visual Literacy in the Writing and Rhetoric Class

I have suggested a rhetorical analysis of certain scenes from the movie and of the website, and although I have offered much for analysis, we must remember that we are talking about using film in a writing class. Therefore, we must have many writing assignments that would enhance student's visual literacy. Writing and rhetoric scholars must theorize the ways in which films such as *Moulin Rouge* can effectively enhance student's writing skills, and create a critical visual literacy. Once the theory is firmly in place, we must take it into the classroom to merge the interdisciplinary nature of both Film and Video Studies and Writing and Rhetoric Studies.

If we are to create a critical visual literacy, we must include audience theory and the communication triangle. In order to analyze and write about the film, students must first position themselves in the place of film director and analyze themselves as a potential audience. They would identify their own general demographic information and then ask themselves about their own relationship to the film's subject. Ensuing discussions and writing can help students see how they themselves shaped the film.

In *Audience and Rhetoric,* James Porter notes, "A writer does not analyze an audience so much as become one with the audience" (115). By analyzing themselves as spectators and chosen audiences of the film, students can understand a visual audience theory that should help them in their writing. For example, types of

experiences that a first-year student might have could be sports, video games, and/or computers. They might know very little about the real Moulin Rouge in Paris, but they likely watch [54]MTV and they know Christina Aguilera. Therefore, if you produce a music video with their favorite stars and use production effects in the movie that are similar to MTV, you can likely draw an MTV-type crowd. If students can see the ways in which movies such as *Moulin Rouge* are marketed directly to them, perhaps they can become smart consumers and thus critical citizens.

After conducting an audience analysis in which they themselves are the audience, students can make use of the Communication Triangle[55] to further analyze the film. If Luhrman is the encoder and students are the decoders, they can use film theory to analyze the ways in which the filmmaker attempts to reach his audience.

To return to the opening musical scene, students can analyze exactly how the director uses editing, music, visual, sexuality, etc. to reach the audience. For example, they can analyze the ways that Luhrman, the encoder, uses editing to reach them, the MTV audience. Of course, this must include an analysis of the ways in which the culture influences the director and the students. In addition, the DVD contains a version of the opening scene that was not used. The scene is much more linear and it lacks the sound and visual cuts. Students could juxtapose the two scenes and write about the director's decision. They could ask which scene is better and why. In addition, students should be able to see how they influence the movie text as

[54] In an open-admissions environment, students may be older, but most people of any age occasionally watch MTV, or they watched it when they were younger, or perhaps they watch it with their own kids.
[55] From James Kinneavy's *A Theory of Discourse*

it influences them. As they extend their analysis to the music video and the website, they can see that they are indeed the intended audience and they are subject to manipulation if they are not aware of the rhetorical situation.

Conclusions

Many popular films could be used to enhance students writing skills and to teach them to consider their own subject positions as they view a screen. Therefore, before choosing a film to use in class, an instructor should carefully consider how the film should be taught and how students can develop a critical visual literacy. Students should consider the whole film experience, including the website, music videos and subsequent release of DVDs. Through choice of films such as *Moulin Rouge,* coupled with carefully crafted writing assignments, students can become critical citizens who possess a critical visual literacy and thus can read their culture and their world. Therefore, I reiterate my call for more theory. As I noted earlier, both Film and Video Studies and Writing and Rhetoric studies are interdisciplinary and thus they overlap nicely. With a touch of feminism, a bit of audience theory, and the Communication Triangle, students can reach for a new literacy and stretch their abilities to know, to be, and to write in a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric class.

Chapter 5

What to Do? What to do?[56]
Curtailing Curtrad and Unveiling a 21st Century Critical Teaching Practice

The future of writing and rhetoric studies, especially first-year writing, is in our hands. While some advocate abolishing the first-year writing requirement altogether;[57] others favor making the course elective.[58] Still others have offered many ideas for revising the course.[59] If we wish to increase the effectiveness of the course as we move through the new millennium, we need 21st century critical teachers

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[56] J. Elspeth Stuckey quoting June Jordan's 1982 NCTE Conference Keynote address

[57] In "The Abolition Debate in Composition: A Short History," Robert Connors writes of reformist periods in which there is "deep interest in improving composition" (47) and abolitionist periods, "when some teachers declare it too hopeless to reform" (47). As Connors tells us, "the required freshman composition course itself is the product of a reformist periods" (47). Early abolition movements were due to the unwillingness of literary scholars to teach it. Now, however, Connors notes those who advocate abolition of the requirement are "insiders" (60) – that is, "people trained as compositionists from an early point in their careers – and it is based on exactly the opposite conclusion: that writing can be taught, and that experts are needed to teach it, but that the required freshman course is not the most effective forum for attaining the ends we seek" (60). Connors himself admits sympathy for the New Abolitionist movement and, as he says, "I look forward to a continuation of the debate and even – could it be? – to real changes in our world of teaching and thinking about writing" (63).

[58] In "A Personal Essay on Freshman English," Sharon Crowley suggests that "we might be able to alter the functions of Freshman English by altering its institutional status" (171). She says, "Let's abolish the universal requirement" (171) with the caveat, "Please note that I am NOT proposing the abolition of Freshman English. I am not so naïve as to think that the course can be abolished. But it can be made elective" (171).

[59] See especially Welch, Berlin, Crowley, and Halasek.

who are willing to do the hard work that it takes to teach first-year writing and rhetoric in a manner that encourages a critical and activist consciousness in students. We need professional first-year writing teachers who are trained to teach the first year course and whose heart is in first-year writing and rhetoric. Yet, the work is not limited to individual teachers; it can only be accomplished by a community of individuals: graduate students, writing and rhetoric professionals, community college instructors and administrators, writing program administrators, and department heads. This must take place not only in the English Studies community, but also in the public education community. All of these folks must participate or at least cooperate, as we formulate a new theory of 21st century critical teaching for writing and rhetoric studies.

Unfortunately, before changes can be made, we must address the fact that the current-traditional paradigm remains intact in many first-year writing and rhetoric programs. Even though many have been railing against this harmful practice for years, it remains in place because it is so teachable. Once we acknowledge that current-traditional pedagogy is still a problem, we can address changes that must be made in programs. Then, when these changes are in place, we can think about a widespread 21st century teaching practice. Thus, this chapter will contain three parts: The first section will argue that current-traditional practices are more widespread than most writing and rhetoric scholars think, and it will also argue for the eradication of the paradigm. The next section will argue for the professionalization of first-year writing through more effective collaboration among programs, more effective training

and mentoring, and better working conditions. The third and final section outlines the 21st century teaching practice that will be possible once programmatic revisions have been made.

A Utopian View?

As I begin this chapter, I am reminded of the words of Peter Elbow:

> It makes me mad when people criticize me as utopian. Surely there is something misguided when the term "utopian" is used and is taken to mean 'unrealistic' and 'unsophisticated.' We need the utopian or visionary impulse to keep from being blinded by what seems normal – to help us see that what is natural is constructed, not inevitable. (Elbow 183)

Perhaps my view, like Elbow's, is utopian. I realize that I have big ideas for the future of writing and rhetoric studies in general, and for the first-year course in particular. Yet, I have been placed in a unique situation where I have been able to observe teaching practices of those with theory, ambition, and caring. I have seen the results of exemplary teaching and the students who emerge from classes with a new love for writing and literacy. I have also observed teachers who are not committed to the first-year course because their training and their ambition lies in literary studies and they teach first-year writing until they can land a "better" job. I have observed teachers who are not reflective and who have been teaching the same units for 20 years or more. Most of these teachers are doing the best that they know how to do,

but their students fail to thrive. In this chapter, I wish to present ideas that could increase the numbers of the first kind of teachers as we move through the first half of the 21st century. I know that my ideas will be resisted by many (especially administrators), and I know that budgets and traditions would need to be manipulated if all of my ideas were implemented. However, as one who truly loves the first-year writing course, and its students, I offer my ideas for the Burkean Parlor.

The Widespread Remains of Curtrad[60]

Let us explore the current-traditional paradigm, for it is a major obstacle that stands in the way of a critical writing and rhetoric teaching practice.

In 1990, Sharon Crowley wrote that "current-traditional rhetoric is a historical hangover" (Methodical xii). She understands that

> Current-traditional rhetoric has prospered partly because college composition teachers generally do not devise the curricula they are asked to teach. Most teachers of composition are graduate students, part-time instructors, or teachers of literature. Since composition teachers work at the very bottom of the academic pecking order, they are not often entrusted with the tasks of devising programs or syllabi or selecting textbooks. And, because of their professional circumstances – which often include the combination of teaching with

[60] I would like to thank Benjamin Harris for the term Curtrad. This collapses the idea of the current-traditional much in the same way that the current-traditional collapses writing and writing instruction into a formulaic recipe such as the five-paragraph theme.

> graduate course work, or four or five or six sections of composition and as many as 150 students at two or three or more institutions – few such teachers have time to read about the scholarly and pedagogical developments that are taking place in rhetoric and composition theory. It is difficult to question a practice so thoroughly institutionalized as current-traditional pedagogy when its teachers do not have access to the scholarly conversations that question its soundness. When teachers are not allowed access to alternative theoretical and pedagogical models, it is difficult even to know that alternatives exist. (Methodical, xii)

Crowley definitively explains why curtrad remains pervasive, yet, 16 years later,[61] it remains a common way of teaching. Most large research universities with Rhetoric and Composition departments have denounced curtrad and as graduates of rhetoric and writing programs have filtered into four year colleges, one could assume that curtrad's reach continues to diminish, yet, writing and rhetoric theory has not yet made its way into pockets of higher education, especially the Community Colleges, since these are the sites of heavy teaching loads for both adjunct and full time faculty.

Crowley states that curtrad is "alive and well" (Methodical 139), and the number of students who were taught with it as late as 1990 were astounding. As she says,

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[61] *The Methodical Memory* was published in 1990. As I write, it is 2006, so 16 years have gone by with little or no change.

> There are an estimated 33,000 composition teachers in this country. If half of them are using current traditional pedagogy, whether by choice or through institutional mandate, and if each of them is assigned 100 students (a conservative estimate), something more than a million and a half students are introduced to the principles of current traditional rhetoric every academic semester. (Methodical 139)

I believe that the number has not grown, but I doubt that it has gotten much smaller. With so much talk about the "literacy crisis" in the United States, no one acknowledges that curtrad might be the crux of the real literacy crisis!

EDNA or The Modes of Discourse

In his canonical essay, "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse," Robert J. Connors traces how, why, and when EDNA dominated composition. He notes how from the late 19th century through the 1950's, "the modes controlled the teaching of composition through complete control of textbooks" (449). He then traces how exposition, description, narration, and argument became the "methods of exposition," (450) and "By the 1940s exposition had become so popular that it was more widely taught than the 'general' model freshman composition course" (450). Therefore, since "exposition was the most 'practical'" (450) of the modes, textbooks focused on the methods of exposition.

Connors says that the modes "became popular and stayed popular because they fit into the abstract, mechanical nature of writing instruction at the time" (453).

Yet, as Connors notes, a crucial aspect of the modes is that they

> did not really help students to learn to write. When we look closely at the nature of modal distinctions, it is not hard to see why: the modes classify and emphasize the product of writing, having almost nothing to do with the purpose for which the writer sat down, pen in hand. Modal distinctions are divorced from the composition process. (454)

Besides being disconnected from the composition process, the problem with the "modes" and other kinds of curtrad driven writing instruction is that they ignore audience and rhetorical situation. In her "Response to Robert J. Connors," Sharon Crowley points out that "EDNAs tenacity is, if anything, underestimated by Connors" (88). Crowley further notes that "the real problem with EDNA, then is that she is not rhetorical. Any viable composition theory must include all the important elements of discourse: writer, text, and audience" (90). Yet, the modes remain in our 21st century culture.

One way to see the pervasiveness of the modes and thus curtrad is by surveying textbook publishing and use. Many best selling textbooks are centered around the "modes" of writing – Exposition, Description, Narrative, and Argument. Most often, the textbooks also make use of expository forms such as Process

Analysis, Exemplification, Classification, Comparison-Contrast, Cause and Effect, and Extended Definition[62].

What's So Bad About Curtrad?

Three scholars have written extensively about the harm that curtrad does to students, and the next section will focus on the work of those scholars. Sharon Crowley's *Methodical Memory*: *Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric* is one canonical text on the subject. In *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies,* Kay Halasek juxtaposes curtrad with a Bakhtinian dialogical theory of writing instruction, and in *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism,*

[62] Perusal of the major textbook publisher sites will show many composition textbooks in this form. From the McGraw-Hill website, www.mhhe.com, one of the featured textbooks is *The Short Prose Reader with Student Access to Catalyst,* 11th *Edition***,** Gilbert H. Muller and Harvey S. Wiener eds. The chapter headings in this text are as follows: "On Reading," "On Writing," "Description," "Narration," "Illustration," "Comparison-Contrast," "Definition," "Classification," "Process Analysis," "Cause and Effect," and "Argument and Persuasion." In addition, the website features 13 modes-based textbooks by Barbara Fine Clouse. In addition, titles such as *Patterns for a Purpose,* and the modes-based patterns contained within suggest that there are reasons or "purposes" for using the patterns. Lest one should think that these are old textbooks, publishing dates are 2003-2006. A search of Bedford St. Martin's website, www.bedfordstmartins.com shows similar results. Its *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide, 10th Edition* and dated 2007 offers similar categories. It is obviously meant for a modes-based pedagogy. The Pearson/Allyn-Bacon/Longman website, www.ablongman.com offers a list of the kinds of textbooks one might want to peruse. The second kind on the list is "modes," with many newly published or newly updated texts. These three major composition publishers point to the continuing popularity of modes-based writing instruction.

and a New Literacy, Kathleen Welch eloquently offers a new theory of "electric" writing instruction that moves beyond curtrad.

Crowley tells us that

> What is wrong with current-traditional rhetoric is that it has very little to do with learning to write. Just as its initial success was stimulated by institutional needs, its continued maintenance by the academy has a good deal more to do with institutional circumstances than it does with the appropriateness of its theory of discourse for writing instruction. (Methodical 147)

Proponents of curtrad seemed concerned with the institution, and with the teachers, but little concern was shown for the students – even when it came to textbooks. Crowley says that current-traditional textbooks gave "untrained teachers something to teach" (147). This supports the pervasive idea that "anyone" can teach first year writing. Furthermore, Crowley notes that,

> In the current traditional classroom, teachers required students to read the textbooks they assigned; they lectured about the prescriptions given in the textbooks; they analyzed finished essays to show how their authors had adhered to textbook prescriptions; and they asked students to complete textbook exercises that drilled them in current-

> traditional prescriptions about grammar, diction, and style.[63]
>
> (Methodical 147)

In this approach, Crowley says, "students don't perform: teachers do" (147). Students are expected to generate ideas through the "select, narrow, amplify" (148) model. They should come up with a thesis, develop support, organize ideas (outline) and then construct the essay (148). As Crowley notices, "Such an assignment generates all the enthusiasm of a visit to the dentist for a root canal. More to the point, it seriously distorts the nature of the writing process . . . The notion that writing itself might generate ideas, instead of the other way around," (148) is ignored, and is not available in current traditional textbooks. Furthermore, "since invention was a matter of forecasting what would appear in writing, current-tradition textbooks identified revision with the correction of mistakes. . . writers revised . . . to pretty up their work so that it met current-traditional standards of correctness" (148).

An even more crucial issue is that of anti-writing. As Crowley notes:

> In fact, students and teachers using the current-traditional model of invention may defer writing altogether, since the current-traditional theme can substitute for writing itself. Often students in a current traditional writing program adopt what Jasper Neel calls "anti-writing" as a survival strategy ([Neel] 84). They dash off version after version of "Three Reasons for Stopping X" – formally perfect five paragraph themes that demonstrate their authors' mastery of the discursive

[63] I observed a course such as this one being taught in Spring 2006. The teacher I observed graded essays according to grammatical errors only.

> principles prescribed by their textbooks. Composition becomes a series of exercises wherein students demonstrate their mastery of textbook trivia. (148-149)

Crowley writes that the "more serious problem with anti-writing" is that "This sort of prose establishes no voice, selects no audience, takes no stand, makes no commitment. It can be produced by anyone, anywhere, at any time, on demand" (149). How boring.

In many curtrad programs, the author's individual voice is erased through insistence that authors must write using ONLY third person. As Crowley states, "Indeed, some current-traditional textbooks frankly acknowledged students' nonidentity by insisting that they erase any textual marks of their presence such as first-person pronouns" (151). Finally, Crowley writes that

> The ultimate irony of the history of current-traditional rhetoric, then, is that its initially democratic impetus to invest everyone with discursive authority was subsumed in the appropriation of writers' authority by text, textbook, teacher, and finally, by the academy itself (153).

Crowley identified all of these problems in *The Methodical Memory,* published in 1990. Yet, in 1999, Kay Halasek and Kathleen Welch were still writing about the harmful nature of curtrad.

Kay Halasek writes about curtrad in relation to the paragraph. In Chapter Five of *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies,* she surveys textbooks and concludes that "instruction in these elements of composition

[the paragraph] remains tied to current-traditional (even scientistic) notions of language, reality, and knowledge" (145). In these textbooks, paragraphs are supposed to be unified, coherent, clear, and in control. The topic sentence is usually the guiding control. Halasek calls this kind of instruction "confining, even oppressive" (154). She says:

> In no composition textbook that I reviewed did I find any suggestion that students engage the messiness and the disjunction rather than try to repress or rectify it, as if messiness were an unnatural state of thought, and clarity and certainty a natural state. Messiness is, of course, always associated with "bad" discourse and clarity with "good." (154)

Furthermore, Halasek notes that "Presentations of paragraphing in composition textbooks ignore the dialogic nature of the paragraph" (154). Conformity is the key word in the current-traditional presentation of the paragraph. Each paragraph must be exactly the same, and straying from the formula will cause lowered grades, as students would soon figure out.

[64]In *Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy,* Kathleen Welch's description of the current-traditional paradigm focuses on the five-paragraph theme, and a "drill-based instruction typified by the five-part theme" (15). Yet, she writes,

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[64] See also Welch's 1987 CCC article, "Ideology and Freshman Textbook Production: The Place of Theory in Writing Pedagogy."

> . . . as rhetoric/composition research since the early 1960s has shown, it kills written invention. Its major achievement is the inculcation of fear and loathing in writers, particularly student writers (but also other writers who might turn to a current-traditional textbook for help). Reading the themes tends to produce pain in the teacher/reader and so is delegated to marginalized teachers of writing who work part time. (15)

Published in 1999, Welch tells us that at that time,

> The current-traditional paradigm is alive and well in hundreds of writing programs in the United States and elsewhere, as well as in most of the writing textbooks that continue to infect the culture and to maintain the current uselessness of the humanities. (15)

In writing about close reading and "its writing pedagogy twin, the current-traditional paradigm," (85) Welch states, "Both institutions act to dehistoricize, deideologize, and replicate an assumed modern male subject into which marginalized Others will inevitably not fit" (85). Even though curtrad was originally theorized for the new open admissions environments of the early 20th century, the open admission creators and original users were white and male.[65] They could never have imagined what open admissions means for the 21st century.[66]

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[65] Bain, Hill, and other influential teachers and textbook editors. See Crowley for a full history.

[66] That is, students of many colors, nationalities, sexual orientations, genders, ages, and life situations.

Welch predicted that the situation would not change and from our vantage point in 2006, we can see that she was correct. She writes that, in the electric future,

> we will continue to have ten percent or so of theorized, up-to-date writing textbooks, while the other ninety percent will continue to reproduce the scourge of the two-hundred-year-old current-traditional paradigm with its faculty associationist psychology, its gridlike boredom-inducing formulas, its commitment to obsessive error correction, and, worst of all, its project of making students writers develop great negativity toward their own writing – a result that leads to an uninformed citizenry bereft of rhetorical strategies, bereft of the understanding that the native tongue drives meaning (language speaks us; we do not speak language), and bereft of the ability to change the dominant culture. (150-151)

The quotes from Welch are crucial for a critical 21st century teaching practice. We seek to empower students, and to teach each student to understand his/her own subject position as well as the subject positions of others. If women and marginalized Others do not fit into a pedagogy, that pedagogy should be especially distasteful for an open admissions environment. Furthermore, a pedagogy that assumes that all students think and learn in the same way is elitist and not appropriate for ANY learning environment.

A critical 21st century teaching practice calls for a critical citizenry. It encourages a student centered classroom so that students can begin to think for

themselves – not so that they can plug words into a formula. There is little room in curtrad for Freirean love because there is little room for any kind of pathos. Aristotle's "available means of persuasion"[67] mean nothing if there is no audience. Social justice cannot be a project and in fact, if curtrad is not curtailed, a 21st century critical teaching practice cannot exist in the places where it is most needed – the two year colleges and open admissions environments.

Therefore, we must work to minimize this harmful practice. Much of what I suggest in the next section will assist us in helping teachers who are firmly entrenched in the curtrad paradigm. Yet, we must also address those textbooks. When they visit our offices, we must tell book reps that the writing and rhetoric field rejects these kinds of textbooks and we must tell them why, for information tends to travel through these sales associates who visit many campuses. I believe that curtrad remains powerful because many teachers and others in charge of curriculum do not know that there is a better way. Or they are resistant to change because they feel they are doing a good job. As the changes I suggest in the next few sections settle into place, curtrad will gradually subside. The death of curtrad will mean the life of rhetoric and writing.

[67] I refer to Book 1, Chapter 2 of Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, where he says "Let Rhetoric be defined as an ability in each [particular] case to see the available means of persuasion" (36).

Asking What If?

Elbow asks, "What if?" And I follow his lead, if not his epistemology. In the next few sections, I ask, what if first-year writing were professionalized. What if teachers like Kyle became the norm? What if Ph.D.s in Rhetoric and Writing flocked to desirable positions in community colleges to teach first-year writing, as well as to research universities to teach graduate students and direct programs? What if English Departments valued first-year writing as the vital area of study and teaching that it should be?

We need teachers who will reach into the Freirean theories that I delineated in Chapter 1. We need teachers who connect to their own classrooms through Ira Shor's student-centered theories, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and Freire's love. These are teachers who know theory and pedagogy. They are well-trained and have completed an apprenticeship in first-year composition. They are reflective and they make student resistances productive. They are like Kyle. Yet, before we ask for a widespread paradigm shift among teachers, we must examine the programs in which they reside, the conditions under which they work, and the context in which they teach.

Professionalizing First Year Writing

My program of action requires many administrators to rethink budgets and administrative strategies. I realize that change does not come easily and that it would

be difficult for many to envision first-year writing as a professional field. However, it is a professional field, and as such, all of its teachers must be treated as professionals.

First of all, the adjunct system must be rethought, especially in the two year college where most courses are taught by adjuncts. It would be advantageous for the colleges, the students, and the teachers if most adjuncts were hired on a yearly basis. (Three years would be even better.) Colleges could develop a pool of loyal teachers if those teachers were guaranteed three or four sections per semester and they knew they had a job from semester to semester. The "freeway flyer[68]" must become a thing of the past. In order to account for fluctuating enrollments, colleges can always employ a few temporary instructors who will move into more permanent position as adjuncts acquire full time positions.

In addition, paying a professor who has the responsibility for influencing the future generation a salary that is less than a living wage should be unthinkable. A living wage standard must be set, with opportunities for healthcare benefits. First-year writing instructors cannot become critical 21st century teachers when they are worried about paying their rent. One exemplary program, Spokane Falls Community College, offers an excellent working community for adjuncts, and it also offers benefits according to Washington state law. The law says, and the college offers:

> anyone who teaches half time (or in quarters, two of three classes/quarter) earns benefits: health, medical, and matched

[68] The "freeway flyer" is the adjunct who teaches sections at several different colleges in order to make a living. He/she spends much time traveling from institution to institution – thus the term "freeway flyer."

> retirement. In medical benefits alone, this amounts to an additional $1000/month for family coverage. This coverage continues in summer for regular adjuncts. (Henderson 479)

This kind of support obviously helps adjunct faculty, but it also helps full time faculty by promoting a more positive community, and it helps students, who will benefit from the positive environment, and the more secure, and thus probably more effective teachers.

Next, opportunities for professional development must be plentiful. Collaboration is key here, and professional development for first-year writing instructors should be conducted by writing and rhetoric professionals. The ideal situation would be for each two year and four year college to have a writing and rhetoric professional (preferably a Ph.D.)[69] to conduct workshops, but collaboration with research universities' writing and rhetoric program professionals could keep all writing teachers on the cutting edge.

The next few sections offer theory, practice, and more detail on professional development and training programs that already exist, for both graduate students and adjunct professors.

Collaboration and Training

Many exemplary teacher training programs exist. In a recent issue of "TYCA to You: News From the Regions of the two-year College English Association," Joel

[69] Many talented holders of M.A.s could easily handle this, but Ph.D.s tend to be more immersed in the field and have done more inquiry more deeply.

Henderson reports information that has been gathered from across the country on the preparation of adjunct faculty. As he says, "issues of pay, inclusion, and working conditions certainly remain important. For our students, however, another issue is of paramount importance: the preparation of our adjunct colleagues" (475). The information gathered by Henderson shows that although training varies across the country, it is still lacking when it comes to creating community and professional development. Some assign faculty mentors for the first year or beyond, and many provide a manual of some kind. A weekly, "Monday Memo" from Department Chair Tim McLaughlin at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston is an excellent idea for helping adjuncts feel connected to information. Orientation meetings are plentiful, some designed especially for new adjuncts, like that at Oklahoma City Community College.

Salt Lake Community College faculty "meet with . . . part time faculty once a month, typically on a Saturday, to discuss curriculum, pedagogy, student success and part-time faculty questions and concerns" (Henderson 481). In addition,

> During the fall, [they] focused on having forums with [their] part time faculty which addressed broad theoretical issues caught up in visual rhetoric and genre theory. Near the end of the semester, [they] attempted to illustrate how the theoretical notions of visual rhetoric were impacting student writing in our courses – a nod to the practical application of all this theory. (Henderson 481)

Johnson Country Community College in Kansas City

> offers an Adjunct Certification course as an option for adjunct faculty college wide – not just in English. . . Upon completion of ACT, the adjuncts faculty member should be cognizant of the college's mission, aware of policies and procedures of the academic branch, comfortable in the college's learning community and equipped with more resources to enhance student learning in the classroom. Upon completion of ACT, the adjunct will receive a one-time stipend of $800. (Henderson 482)

This is an interesting concept indeed, and it would seem to be an excellent way to build loyalty and community among adjuncts. The above mentioned ideas all represent attempts to make working conditions better for the adjunct community. The workshops and training programs that offer a complimentary meal and/or a stipend of some kind are the most encouraging, for time is always a factor. When adjuncts are dealing with two or three different institutions, it would seem that they would be more loyal to one, and could not possibly attend all training and development sessions. Adjunct instructors often have families and other obligations and it is a balancing act for everyone involved.

Preparing Future Faculty

Yet, although good things are happening, training programs must be extended and increased in scope and depth. Therefore, let us discuss training programs for graduate students for, before teachers become faculty or adjunct, they are apprentice

teachers in graduate school and the training provided is crucial. A student who is working on a terminal M.A. should receive extensive training in the teaching of first year writing because that is likely to be a major part of their teaching load, whether they become full-time faculty or adjunct faculty. Those who go on to the Ph.D. in Writing and Rhetoric should be offered a concentration in first-year writing if that is where their interests lie.

If one is going to teach 18th century British Literature, it would be expected that he/she would have expertise in 18th century British Literature, and that would involve more than a two week workshop and a one semester introductory course. Yet, the best first-year writing and rhetoric programs tend to require only the completion of a workshop and the one semester course. Many graduate students complete the requirements and continue to teach first-year writing, never to visit the literature and/or theory of the area again. The worst programs hand graduate students and adjuncts a textbook and maybe a departmental syllabus[70]. My point is that first-

[70] For example, Irwin Weiser relates his experience,

> In 1974, I began my career as a composition teacher: A second-year doctoral student, I was assigned a composition class in the spring and told when and where it would meet in the fall. I was told where the sample textbooks were shelved and when and to whom to submit my textbook order. I talked with one or two TAs who had taught the course before, borrowed their syllabi, perused the bookshelves, ordered two books that I was unable to recognize as theoretically at opposite ends of the composition spectrum, and prayed when fall came I'd 'first, do no harm,' and second, not be hated by the students I would teach (or perhaps it was the other way around). My previous teaching experience had been one semester as a grader in a literature lecture course and one semester as the leader of a discussion section and grader in a composition/literature course. My previous formal preparation for teaching composition: none. (40)

year writing seems to be the only course that requires little expertise from its teachers. In fact, in many areas, it is still commonly thought that ANYONE can teach first year writing. That way of thinking needs to change and it needs to change soon.

The exemplary teacher training programs (such as the one described by Michael Flanigan in Chapter 3) require hands on development of teaching materials in a student-centered environment. This way, the apprentice teachers can experience the model of an exemplary classroom environment. As noted in Chapter 3, these new teachers may never have experienced the student-centered environment because so many graduate level seminars are taught as lecture courses.

Yet, one semester of composition pedagogy, even when combined with theory, is not enough for one to be qualified to teach a professionalized version of first-year writing. What about the history of rhetoric and composition? How can someone who has no knowledge (or interest in) the Sophists, Plato, Aristotle, Freire, Vygotsky, or Bakhtin possibly impart an enthusiasm for writing in their students? How can someone who has never read the basic 20th century theoretical texts such as Berlin, Hillocks, Crowley, Halasek, or Welch possibly hope to teach an effective first year writing class? The answer is, it can be done and it is done everyday in classrooms all over the United States. But, it could be done better. Writing and Rhetoric Studies is a discipline and those who wish to teach first-year writing must be familiar with the discipline, if not well versed.

The first year writing and rhetoric course cannot remain as a form of income for graduate students and adjuncts until they find a "real" job. If the course is going

to be taught, it must be taught by well-trained professionals and if graduate students want an income during their studies, they must be willing to become well-trained professionals who take the course seriously. While universities should be responsible for this training, the two year college should also bear responsibility for hiring trained adjuncts. The common requirement is a Masters Degree with 18 credit hours in English. At least 6 of those credit hours, or two courses, should specifically be "teaching of writing."

Melanie Brown writes about her experience with the PFF (Preparing Future Faculty) program.[71] While at a major research university (University of Minnesota), she attended PFF activities in which

> Panels of faculty from the Twin Cities area community colleges, liberal arts schools, comprehensive state universities, and Minnesota shared their experiences teaching and mentoring students at their schools and what qualities they look for in potential faculty during hiring processes. (Brown)

This is the kind of collaboration that helps everyone and can assist in professionalizing the first-year writing course by showing future faculty how important the course and training for the course can be when it is time to look for a job.

[71] Information about the program can be found at www.preparing-faculty.org.

Mentoring New Teachers

One of the ways in which Kyle developed into a critical teacher so early is that he had extensive and close mentoring from a Composition Rhetoric and Literacy faculty member and a GTA with 5 years experience in the program. Irwin Weiser points out the importance of mentoring, especially when TAs mentor other TAs in "When Teaching Assistants Teach Teaching Assistants to Teach: A Historical Review of a Teacher Preparation Program." As Weiser notes, it would be impractical, especially in a program as large as his at Purdue, to hire faculty to mentor new writing teachers. He points out the importance of keeping mentoring groups small, and thus, experienced rhetoric and writing TAs are often the best choice. In addition, as Weiser states,

> Another good reason to appoint TAs as mentors involves disciplinary knowledge. ….Our graduate program in rhetoric and composition attracts talented students and familiarizes them with theory, research, and practice in the discipline. Not only do students for whom rhetoric and composition is the primary area become familiar with this work, but a number of graduate students in other areas take rhetoric and composition and graduate courses as a secondary field. (46)

These graduate student mentors are only those who have completed their "Ph.D. preliminary examinations" (46), so, these mentors are "more familiar with the scholarship and more recently experienced in the pedagogy of composition than the majority of our non-rhetoric and composition faculty" (46). This is an exemplary

program indeed and it offers opportunities for the professionalization of first-year writing. This mentorship assures the knowledge of theory and the important applications of this theory in the classroom. However, this kind of mentoring can only occur in a university with a large Writing and Rhetoric program such as Purdue. Smaller universities and community colleges rarely have access to graduate student teaching assistants.

In addition, Betty Bamberg reminds us of the nature of WPA work:

> One year's cadre of new TAs has no sooner completed its initial preparation than WPAs must begin gearing up for next year's groups. Given the limited resources available in most programs, relatively little time or energy is likely to remain for supervising experienced TAs and for continuing staff development. (147)

In addition, it is difficult to know how much freedom to give second year TAs. Some are ready to teach without supervision; some are not, and "because TAs do not necessarily move steadily along this developmental continuum, supervision can play a critical role in helping them evolve from a senior learner into a junior colleague" (Bamberg 48). Bamberg's theory focuses on reflective practice, and as she says, "Introducing TAs to reflection and modeling it during the practicum are not enough to ensure that it will continue; structures must be created to sustain and support reflection" (152-153). Bamberg found, as many of us do, that trying to require TAs to meet several times during the semester for mentoring and connection can be futile, due to the harried lives and schedules of TAs and adjuncts. Thus, Bamberg requires

attendance at an "advanced" workshop, one each semester. She used these advanced workshops to discuss newly adapted materials, as well as to reflect on concerns suggested by TAs. I would suggest that other possible uses of this time could be to apply theory to practice. These are the kinds of mentoring and training programs that could be useful in community colleges as well.

A recent discussion on the WPA listserv gleaned enormous amounts of wisdom from experienced mentors. In the discussion, Charles Paine asked for help for teachers in his program who were struggling. With TAs, the advice flowed easily with very good suggestions such as "mid-term evaluations" (Glau), or a "staff position devoted to new TAs" (Lipson), or possibly pairing the struggling teachers "with selective rhet/comp faculty in your program" (Moghtader). When Elizabeth Wardle complicated the issue by asking what could be done when the struggling teacher was an adjunct rather than a TA, the answers became more complicated. Shelley Reid offered good suggestions that bear repeating: "I recommend that the mentor and mentee together start by agreeing on a "few" problems to address" (Reid). Next, Reid suggests that "the mentor and mentee should agree on a series of goals along a timeline, and a way to get mid-semester feedback about the implementation of those goals" (Reid). Furthermore, Reid refers to Ebest and suggests that "new teachers engage in teacher-research….that they set themselves a question about their teaching and design a way to collect evidence to answer it" (Reid). Writing and Rhetoric teachers must take their teaching seriously and just as the teacher of 18th century British Literature expects students to study and learn and demonstrate their

knowledge through performance – class discussion, essays, and/or exams, writing teachers should expect students to study, learn, and perform.

First Year Writing and Rhetoric and Marginalization

As Ann Ruggles Gere writes, "Composition instructors have been exploited with heavy work loads and low pay since writing instruction was introduced into the academy. From its earliest appearance in the academy nearly a century ago, composition has been marginalized as a field" (Gere 126). This marginalization and other political aspects of professionalizing writing and rhetoric studies are in the forefront. In addition to the exploitation of writing instructors, WPAs know that the administration of writing programs involves an important application of theory, research, and thus scholarship, but yet is usually overlooked as unimportant during tenure reviews. Yet, John Trimbur states that

> writing teachers [have] cast themselves as a kind of religion of the oppressed, small islands of the saved, where the legitimacy of success seemed to threaten their very identities as the humble and unauthorized professors of a truth our literature counterparts cannot bear: namely, that we care about students precisely because we have invested ourselves, both intellectually and affectively, in their personal growth and well-being instead of in turf warfare over who is qualified to interpret a body of texts. (Writing Instruction, 135-136)

Trimbur's statement suggests that we (writing instructors) do not contribute to the "turf warfare" between ourselves and our literature counterparts, but perhaps we engage in our own turf warfare from within. Trimbur reminds us that departments and professions are social formations and that there are major differences that "enable and constrain the study and teaching of writing" (Writing Instruction 139). The first difference he notes is probably the most important one: "Differences . . . based on type of educational institution" (139). There are major differences in teaching loads, salaries, class size, photocopying budget, between a community college and a research university. Yet first-year writing is taught at practically every degree granting institution in the United States. Trimbur believes that

> the provision of writing instruction follows the same stratified patterns of class reproduction that Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis identified in American postsecondary education, from community colleges to low-prestige state colleges to high-prestige liberal arts colleges and research universities, with teaching loads and class sizes larger and salaries and institutional support smaller in community and state colleges. (Writing Instruction 139)

He is probably right, yet, dedicated critical writing teachers are present in each kind of institution.

As Gere notes, "Even though we have achieved professional status for some of our members, it has coincided with (and may have actually caused) an increased exploitation of other members of the field" (125). Yes, our profession is stratified,

but it need not be, especially if the first- year course is valued and professionalized as it should be. More writing and rhetoric Ph.D.s need to enter the community college to teach first-year writing and rhetoric as a matter of choice. Indeed, writing and rhetoric Ph.D.s continue to be in demand in research universities and thus we tend to migrate to the more prestigious programs. No one can blame us for this, yet, we must also consider opportunities at the two year level if we are to make a difference.

The Two Year College

Two year and community college writing programs place unique demands on writing instructors and these are the sites most in need of professionalization and 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teachers. As Sylvia A. Holladay writes, "Students in community colleges desperately need power and control of their language and their lives" (29). Teaching is at the forefront in the two year college, and thus, training and development of teachers should be at the forefront as the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher evolves. Holladay notes, "As we learn, we change. We must be flexible. We have no choice." (35). She writes the credo of the 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher: "Yes, we who teach composition in community colleges do so because we care – about our language, about education, about our world, but most of all about our students who are struggling to be free individuals" (37). The importance of community college students within the academic community cannot be denied.

Full time teaching in a community college is so time-intensive that instructors often don't have time for training or theory. In this way, their situation is similar to the one that Bamberg describes in California. Thus, community colleges might do well to consider workshops similar to Bamberg's to address theory, discuss teaching practices, and build community. It is crucial that the university and the community college collaborate rather than compete, and perhaps the university could sponsor workshops that would be attended by community college professionals. We serve different student populations, yet, the writing theories and practices that reach students and produce critical and activist students are the same.

Jo Ann Buck and Fran MacGregor write of a collaborative opportunity that worked for everyone involved. As faculty at Guilford Technical Community College in North Carolina, they relied heavily on adjunct instructors. The effective community college preparation programs of the 1970s had disappeared by 1998, and Buck, MacGregor, and colleagues decided to attempt to fill the "adjunct gap and to prepare specially trained full-time community college teaching professionals" (244). They contacted the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and North Carolina A&T State University to recruit graduate students who might be interested in community college teaching. They recruited, trained, and mentored three graduate students. The bonus for the students was that they gained invaluable experience in a community college atmosphere and the advantage to Guilford was to fill teaching vacancies with apprentices who were uniquely interested in the community college experience. As Buck and MacGregor write, "Because our intention is not simply to

train community college teachers of English, but rather to facilitate the development of fully-functioning community college professionals, the teaching assistants also serve the department and the college in other ways" (247). The students spent time working in the writing center, attended departmental meetings, and regular in-service training projects. They were asked to join NCTE and to attend professional conferences. Through this open collaboration, the students were able to participate in a professional atmosphere and they were prepared to be community college writing teachers in a unique way. This kind of collaboration is essential if we are to prepare and maintain a 21st century critical teaching practice.

If writing and rhetoric studies and first-year writing are professionalized, these teachers who care so much can have the opportunity to learn the theory behind what they do. As the teachers are valued and compensated accordingly for their efforts, they in turn will be more motivated and optimistic teachers and will generate more motivated and optimistic students. Motivated and optimistic students become better writers, and this, of course, is our ultimate goal.

Becoming a 21st Century Critical Writing and Rhetoric Teacher

In the previous section, I have outlined my program for training, mentoring and thus professionalizing first-year writing and rhetoric – especially in the two year institution. I believe that the two year colleges can learn a lot from the universities and that partnerships and sharing should take place. Just as experienced TAs mentor new TAs, universities should mentor two year colleges in the teaching of writing.

Yet, even with the best training and mentoring programs and exemplary working conditions, the burden lies with individual teachers. Teachers must be willing to theorize technology so that they can use it effectively in the classroom. They must make the classroom rhetorical, avoiding skills and drills, modes, and curtrad altogether. They must be equipped with their own kind of critical literacy so that they may pass it on to their students. They must offer love, understanding, and encouragement, and they must explore multiple differences and the intersections contained therein. They cannot shy away from discussions of politics, rhetoric, propaganda, race, and/or gender. The critical and reflective attitude that must be present in a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher must come from within.

Teaching Writing and Rhetoric and the Post Fordist era

Context is crucial and we all know that cultural and economic conditions in the U.S. have changed a great deal since the 1980s. In the 21st century, first-year writing must take these changing conditions into account. As James Berlin writes in "English Studies, Work, and Politics in the new Economy," "English Studies has a special role in the democratic education and mission" and thus, "its influence extends far beyond its own hallways" (225). Berlin reminds us that it is increasingly important to turn out students who can compete in the new managerial job market. These are students who "are expert communicators, are capable of performing multiple tasks, can train quickly on the job, and can work collaboratively with others"

(219). Berlin believes that our students must be prepared to function in a decentered world and we must adjust to the changing work world, since,

> this process of decentering and fragmentation has indeed shaken the foundations of our experience as workers, consumers, and citizens. It has encouraged dramatic disruptions not only in the worlds of work and culture but also in traditional conceptions and practices across the academy. (220)

In Berlin's mind, the post-Fordist curriculum should be "fairly consistent in objectives and methods" (222), and while students should be prepared for work in a postmodern economy, they should also become critical citizens, as well as "active and critical agents in shaping the economic, social, political, and cultural conditions of their historic moment" (223).

Thus, as Berlin shows, the context of the course is vitally important and even as we prepare critical citizens, we must have the idea of work in our minds.

21st Century Critical Teaching Practice

In Chapter 1, I outlined the hoped-for results of a 21st century critical teaching practice for writing and rhetoric. The first task that I proposed was for ***students to be able to distinguish rhetoric from propaganda by analyzing texts such as Aristotle's On Rhetoric and using philosophies such as Toulmin's theory of argumentation to scrutinize popular culture and political debates.*** Toulmin is especially effective in

my mind, because it forces students to determine the warrant of every argument[72]. When students master this philosophy, they can read the rhetoric of the culture in a much more effective manner.

As I noted in chapter 3, 21st century critical rhetoric and writing teachers tackle the difficult material, and when that difficult material is presented, students will rise to any challenge. It is important for students to engage with the original texts, even if it is difficult for them to do so. Thus, it is vitally important to take the Ancient Greeks into the classroom. First year students tend to think that the world began with their birth, and it is crucial for them to study rhetorics and writing practices of those who came before them. Students can contextualize rhetoric as they apply it to their own subject positions.[73] They can see how Sophistic rhetoric remains in our culture,[74] as well as Aristotelian rhetoric and as they are led to understand the differences and the nuances, they can perhaps more effectively question the leadership of our country and the rhetorics and propagandas that proliferate in our culture. Most students have been introduced to "The Rhetorical Triangle" in some form or another, but they need to read the original source. "The Rhetorical Triangle"

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[72] Although Ramage, Bean, and Johnson offer an excellent way of using Toulmin and Aristotle via the enthymeme in their *Writing Arguments* series, I would take portions of Toulmin's *Uses of Argument* directly into the classroom. If not carefully theorized and presented as a philosophy, Toulmin can become quite prescriptive and formulaic.

[73] Popular musicians can be especially adept with rhetoric. Students can be led to analyze the rhetoric of musicians such as Green Day, whose anti-war message in the song and video "American Idiot" can be fascinating to analyze. This brings students to analyze the rhetoric of their own world.

[74] Politicians make this easy for us. We can analyze formal debates for their propensity to try to "win at all costs," and we can analyze debates, commercials, and interviews for the logical fallacies that permeate this kind of discourse.

can become an elusive symbol for many students, but when it is contextualized, and students read what Aristotle said about the means of persuasion, the rhetorical triangle makes more sense. Perhaps they can determine how a political candidate uses the rhetorical triangle to persuade his or her audience, and then they can use the triangle to persuade their own.

Leading students to question can lead them into activism and of course, that is our goal. In addition, students should explore the agonistic discourse that takes place on television networks, those which Deborah Tannen calls the "argument culture" in which two sides are presented, they attack each other on-air, and proceed through a yelling match where no one "wins" (Tannen). They should pit this kind of argument against Rogerian or delayed thesis argument where listening is emphasized.

In addition, textbooks such as Lazere's *Reading and Writing for Civic Literacy* offer propaganda from all sides of the political spectrum. Using this text, or a similar text, students can analyze the words of political rhetoricians and propagandists such as Rush Limbaugh, and they can be led to analyze the rhetoric of current news stories. Lazere proposes that we "redefine English studies as a discipline centered on critical thinking and national public rhetoric . . . ("Postmodern," 283). As students continue to read and learn political positions, defining terms such as "Democrat," "Republican," "liberal," "conservative," and "feminist," they can come to terms with my second goal – ***they can know that rhetoric tends to be biased and that all political positions are subjective.***

The third goal for the critical 21st century writing and rhetoric class requires students to ***understand the subject positions of others and approach all issues with open hearts and open minds***. This goal could be accomplished with diversity writing programs, defined by Phillip Marzluf as "a pedagogical approach that invites students to apply critical reading and writing strategies to situate themselves within, analyze, and research the political and cultural assumptions, consequences, and issues that constitute human difference" (503). Too many students live in a kind of bubble and surround themselves with people who are similar to themselves. Diversity writing programs can build understanding and a critical 21st century writing and rhetoric teacher can use her training and her Freirean perspective to build understanding in a major way. Diversity writing can be applied to a whole program or to a single class. The prospects are endless.

As we learned from Kyle, we must recognize and respect the many subjectivities that students bring into the classroom. Even with all of his training and mentoring, the understanding of multiple subjectivities became a crucial aspect of Kyle's success in the classroom, and most of this came from within Kyle. Race and gender, racism and sexism are topics that must be discussed. To repeat a crucial quote from Welch, "[students] need to become aware of the little histories in their heads and of how they relate to the articulations as intersubjective performances within discourse communities" (Electric 70). As Welch writes, our "racist past will be replicated in electric rhetoric unless the racist construction of objectivist historiography is interrogated and reinscribed" (Electric 119). Indeed, my course on

race described in Chapter 2 was based on this argument. As I saw it, the racist past was being replicated by the AGR fraternity and my students needed to interrogate and reinscribe through the words of Ida B. Wells. As Welch notes, "Incorporating the historicizing of ideas into all writing courses helps students enter more easily the Burkean parlor of cultural conversation and, of course, works against the content/form binary that inheres in the current-traditional paradigm" (139). Curtrad has no place in a 21st century critical teaching practice.

Susan Jarratt tells us that it is important to "explore and construct through our rhetoric the complex interconnections among multiple differences" (Introduction 13). It is our task to help students find agency in a way defined by Nedra Reynolds: "Agency is not simply about finding one's own voice, but also about intervening in discourses of the everyday and cultivating rhetorical tactics that make interruption and resistance an important part of any conversation" (59). This leads us to the next goals which would need to incorporate resistance and interruption. Like a pedagogy of possibility, a 21st century critical teaching practice "seeks to engage students in a purposeful resistance" (Halasek, *Pedagogy of Possibility,* 184). This is a resistance that is productive and push the student toward "not simply nam[ing] and reject[ing] the authoritative word but . . . generat[ing] answerable utterances that provide alternatives to or improvements upon those conditions she sees as unsatisfactory" (184).

In other words, if goals 1-3 are effectively reached, goals 4 and 5 would naturally follow. These goals would be more difficult, because it would be difficult

to know if students really become actively involved in political and social causes, or if they reach goal 4 and ***insist on social justice for all races and genders***. We cannot force students to act once they have finished our courses, but we can inspire them through daily discussions, assignments that make them think about acting, and through our own actions. The 21st century rhetoric and writing teacher must be willing to become actively involved in political and social causes if we expect our students to do so. And we must be prepared for some students to ***become actively involved in political and social causes*** that we do not agree with.

The sixth goal is the most important. As students are able to contextualize rhetoric and propaganda, identify warrants and unstated assumptions, recognize bias, understand and care about others, become actively involved, politically and socially; and if they are to remain effective in their endeavors, they must be able to ***write persuasively and effectively for chosen specific audiences.*** For this to happen, the days of the "easy" writing class must end. The class must be rigorous and require daily writing assignments. With the readings that I propose, and the performance that should be required, students will come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This would require regular written responses and/or postings to an electronic discussion board.

Some would argue that this kind of pedagogy leaves too much room for teachers to put forth their own political positions. I reiterate that the teacher is not there to spout his/her political positions. Instead, the teacher must lead her students to make informed decisions about political and social issues. I agree with Maxine

Hairston when she states that teachers do not have the right "to use their classrooms as platforms for their own political views" (707). This would not involve a true Freirean caring for students, nor would it promote critical thinking. Students tend to either parrot an admired teacher's viewpoint or resist to the point of total disinterest. (Remember my silent resistors from Chapter 2). I agree with Hairston when she says, "all of us are looking for ways to promote genuine diversity in our classes" (705), and I agree when she says "student's own writing must be the center of the course" (705). However, I disagree about critical essays to be brought into the classroom. Essays should not be for subject matter, as Hairston states, but for the purpose of critical thinking. With the essays come issues, and a 21st century critical writing and rhetoric teacher does not avoid the issues. I vehemently disagree with Hairston's assertion that we should not get "into areas where we may have passion and conviction but no scholarly base from which to operate" (705). By its very nature, Rhetoric and Composition is interdisciplinary and I do not need to possess a Ph.D. in Political Science in order to help students read political rhetoric. I disagree with Hairston's assertion that I sacrifice the "integrity" of my course "as a writing course" (705) because that would go against everything I assert as a 21st century critical writing teacher. Writing remains the focus of the course.[75]

As I stated in Chapter 1, a critical teacher shares power and authority in the classroom and I look to Kay Halasek for final thoughts, because a *Pedagogy of*

[75] After initial publication of Hairston's article in CCC, the issue ignited a lengthy conversation. See "Responses to Maxine Hairston 'Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing,' and Reply in CCC 44 (May 1993).

Possibility is definitely a 21st century critical teaching practice. She states: "A pedagogy of possibility is a student-generated (not simply student-centered) pedagogy in which students are given and expected to bear responsibility for the construction of the classroom and its goals" (180). She believes that "students and teachers must share responsibility for creating a productive learning environment" (181). While the 20th century classroom was student-centered, the student-generated pedagogy gives students an important stake in their own learning.

Halasek also notes the key characteristics that must be present in a "truly" dialogic pedagogy These characteristics also help facilitate my goals of a 21st century critical teaching practice: "Student writing must be made public. . ." (191). This is a way of setting in motion my sixth goal that students must be able to write persuasively and effectively for chosen specific audiences. In this philosophy, students "write not only to the teacher, but also to audiences outside the classroom" (Halasek 191).

Other characteristics include: "Students must have a substantial and defining voice in constructing the curriculum of the course" (191). In fact, in his second year of teaching, Kyle took in a blank syllabus and had students construct the semester in collaboration. They were quite surprised because no teacher had ever done this, but they also took the task seriously, as they recognized that they had a stake in the class and thus, their own education. This kind of responsibility encourages students and is an example of Freirean praxis, as Halasek notes: "The work of the classroom must be informed by a sense of Freirean praxis, of reflection and action." In addition, the

simple act of allowing students to construct the syllabus assists in defining the classroom "by a sense of mutual understanding and respect," (Halasek 191) and it insists that ". . . knowledge making is a collective endeavor" (Halasek 191). While these are all characteristics of a dialogic classroom, they also inform a 21st century critical teaching practice.

Final thoughts

Thus, I reiterate that I recognize that professionalizing first-year writing and rhetoric is no simple task. Revising programs is a huge undertaking, but the revisions I suggest make the 21st century critical writing teacher a possibility.

As we re-theorize the class, our palimpsest must remain Freirean and feminist as new theories merge with old. The time is right to think and re-think; to envision and re-vision the first year rhetoric and writing sequence. Thousands of students will move through these courses year after year, and we have a unique opportunity to influence a critical citizenry in a brief, yet crucial way. This can be done only if, as we reach forward into a 21st century activist, critical, consciousness, we remember to reach back to a Freirean sense of sharing, praxis, and love.

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